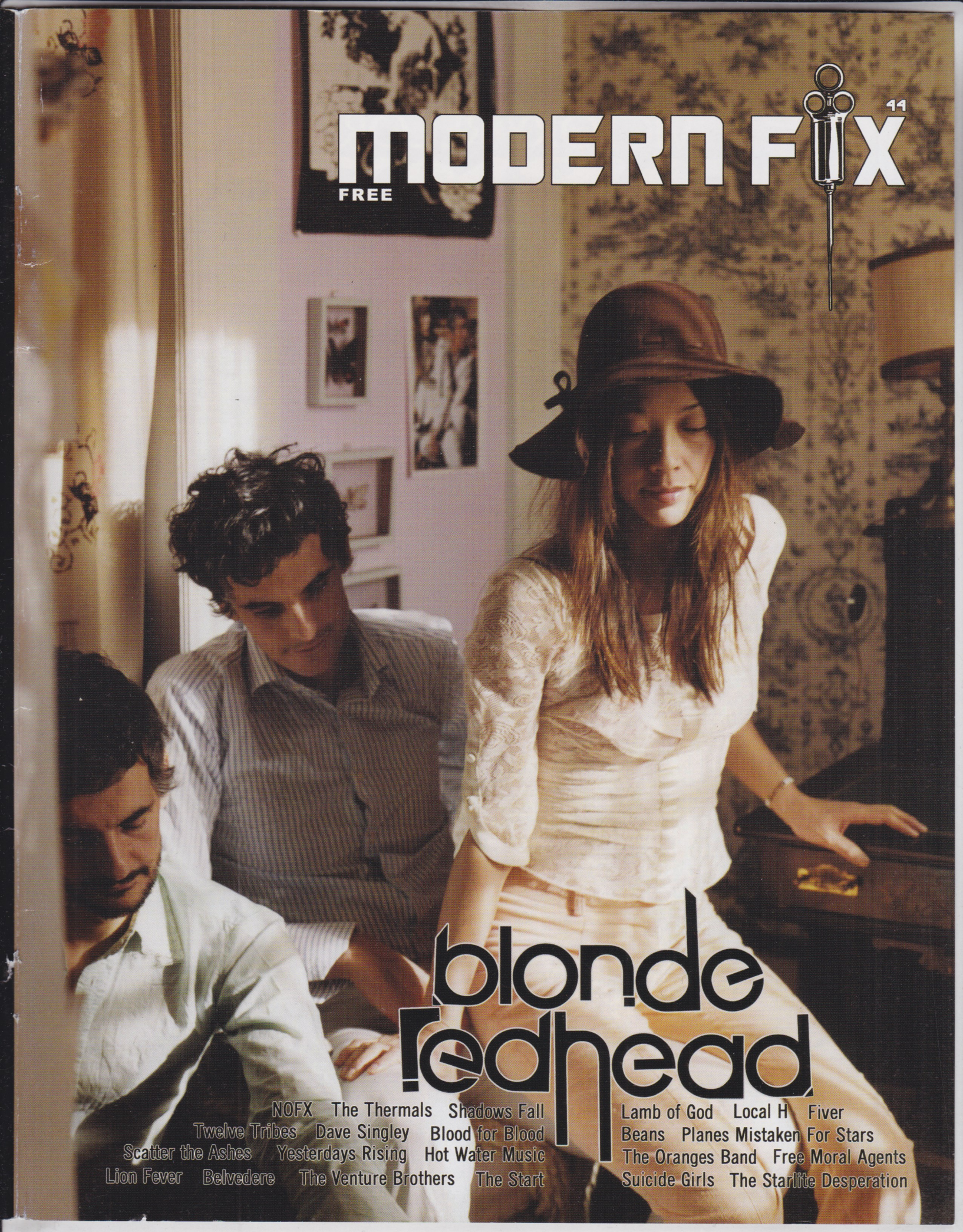
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blonde redhead
NOFX The Thermals Shadows Fall
Twelve Tribes Dave Singley Blood for Blood
Scatter the Ashes Yesterdays Rising Hot Water Music
Lion Fever Belvedere The Venture Brothers The Start
Lamb of God Local H Fiver
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The Oranges Band Free Moral Agents
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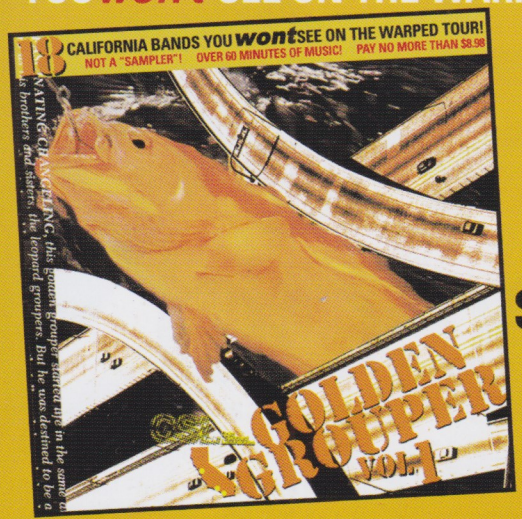

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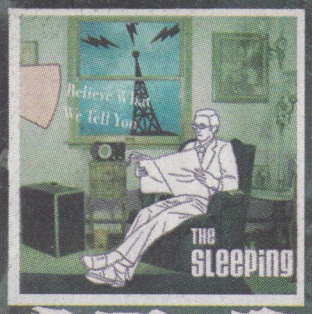
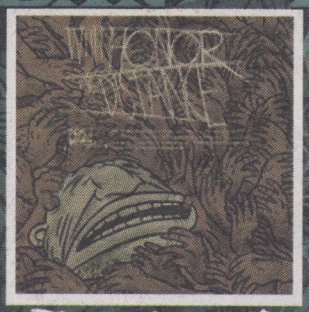


The Sleeping > Believe What We Tell You

With 3/5 of skycamefalling in their lineup and former vocalist for NJ's Stillwelle, The Sleeping aren't meant to be taken lightly and their debut album "Believe What We Tell You" says exactly that. The sleeping enlisted Mike Birnbaum and Chris Bittner (of Coheed and Cambria/Anberlin fame)to both engineer and produce "Believe What We Tell You." Laced with lush harmonies, melodic and driving guitar lines, and pummeling breakdowns, The Sleeping push the envelope in every genre they can be compared to. This album is recommended for fans of Thrice, Taking Back Sunday, and Brand New.

-Onedaysavior Recordings



With Honor/The Distance > Split

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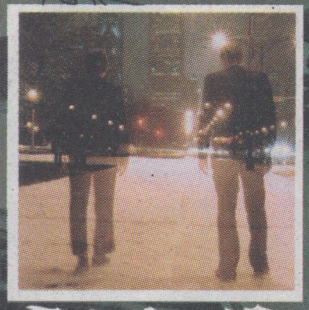
-Martyr Records

Glory Of This > Adoration

One listen to "Adoration" and you will be hooked, from it's catchy melodies and riffs to it's towering breakdowns, this is an instant classic. Throw it in your back pack. Recommended for fans of Finch, Static Lullaby, From Autumn to Ashes, and Dead Poetic.

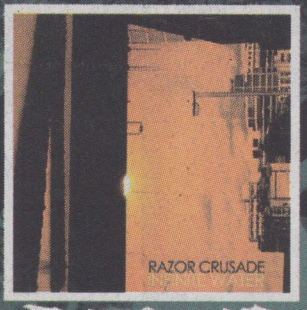
-Indianola Records



The Firebird Band > The City At Night

Chris Broach (Braid, L'Spaerow, Life at Sea) and John Isberg (The Blackouts) have composed a dark, mood laden, soundtrack for the class of 3020's art school prom. The perfect balance of electronic experimentation and driving organic instrumentation make "The City At Night" a timeless masterpiece of an album.

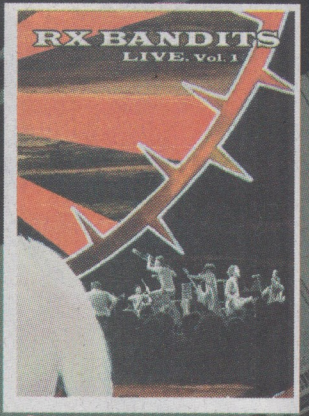
-Bifocal Media



Razor Crusade > Infinite Water

"Infinite Water" is an awe inspiring and passionate collection of songs. Calling to a simpler time, when bands wrote music merely for expression's sake. Evoking thoughts of their direct influences (Quicksand, Helmet, Refused, etc) while still carving out their own unique place within the hardcore community and beyond.

-Deathwish Inc.



RX Bandits > Live. Vol. 1

This DVD is a documentation of footage from over a year worth of RxBandits shows with the majority of focus being placed on three benefit concerts performed at Chain Reaction in 2003. With over two hours of footage from the three shows as well as bonus "bootleg" videos, a picture gallery, and a very rare acoustic set, it offers a glimpse into the unique action and positivity that can only truly be captured through their live experience.

-Mashdown Babylon

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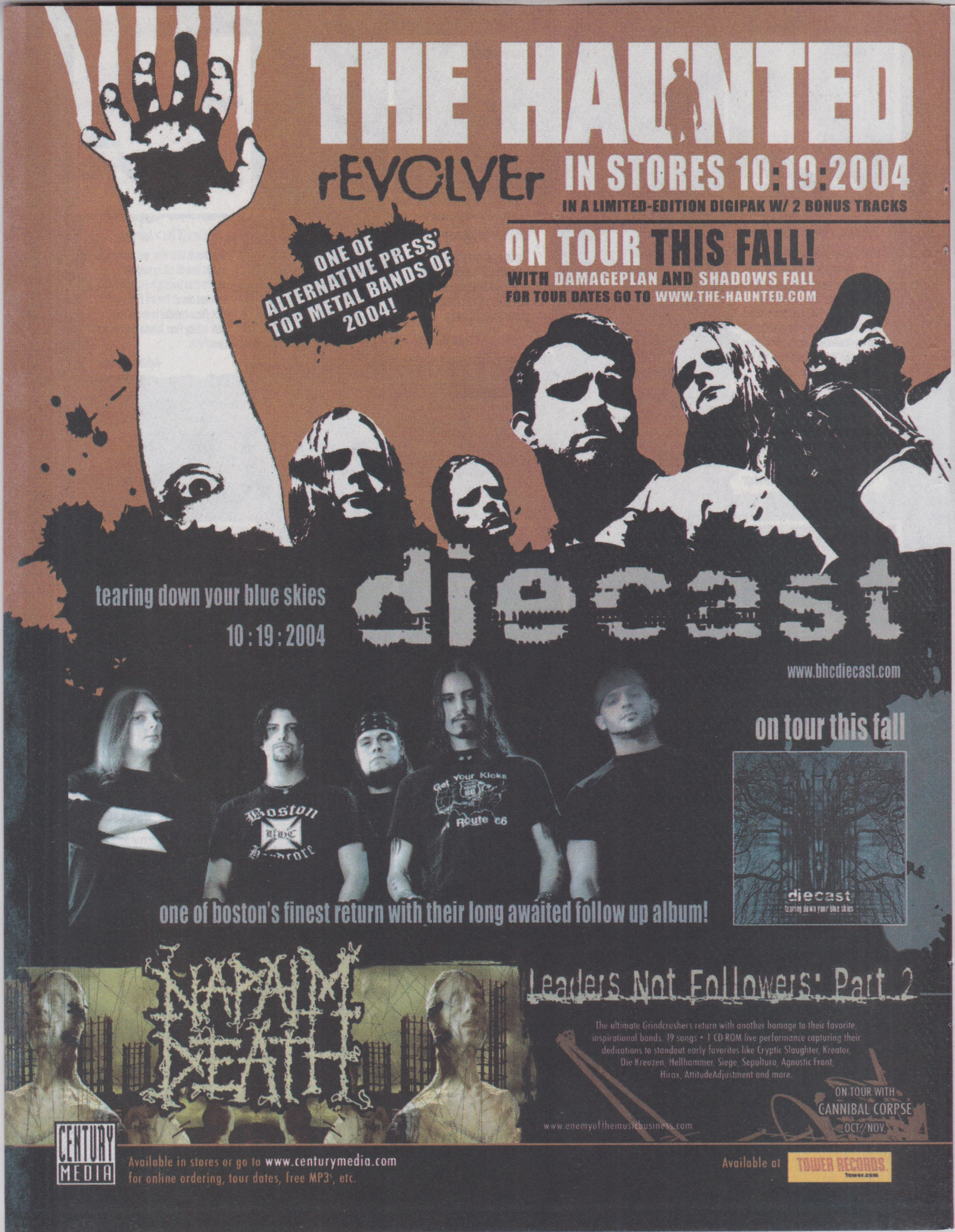
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Cover photo: Josh Rothstein

Since forming during 1993 in New York City, Blonde Redhead have released a total of six albums, the most recent being "Misery Is A Butterfly" which was released in the Spring of 2004 via 4AD Records. The groups name is derived from a song by the eighties no-wave band, DNA. Consisting of Italian twin brothers, Simone (drums, keyboards) and Amedeo Pace (guitar, vocals) and Kazu Makino (guitars, keyboards, vocals,) Blonde Redhead were originally a quartet before they became one of the most talented trios in modern rock.

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Elephants are bigger in person.
-Chris Griffin (The Family Guy)

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

BY SHANNON WHEELER

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PEDIGREE GIRLS

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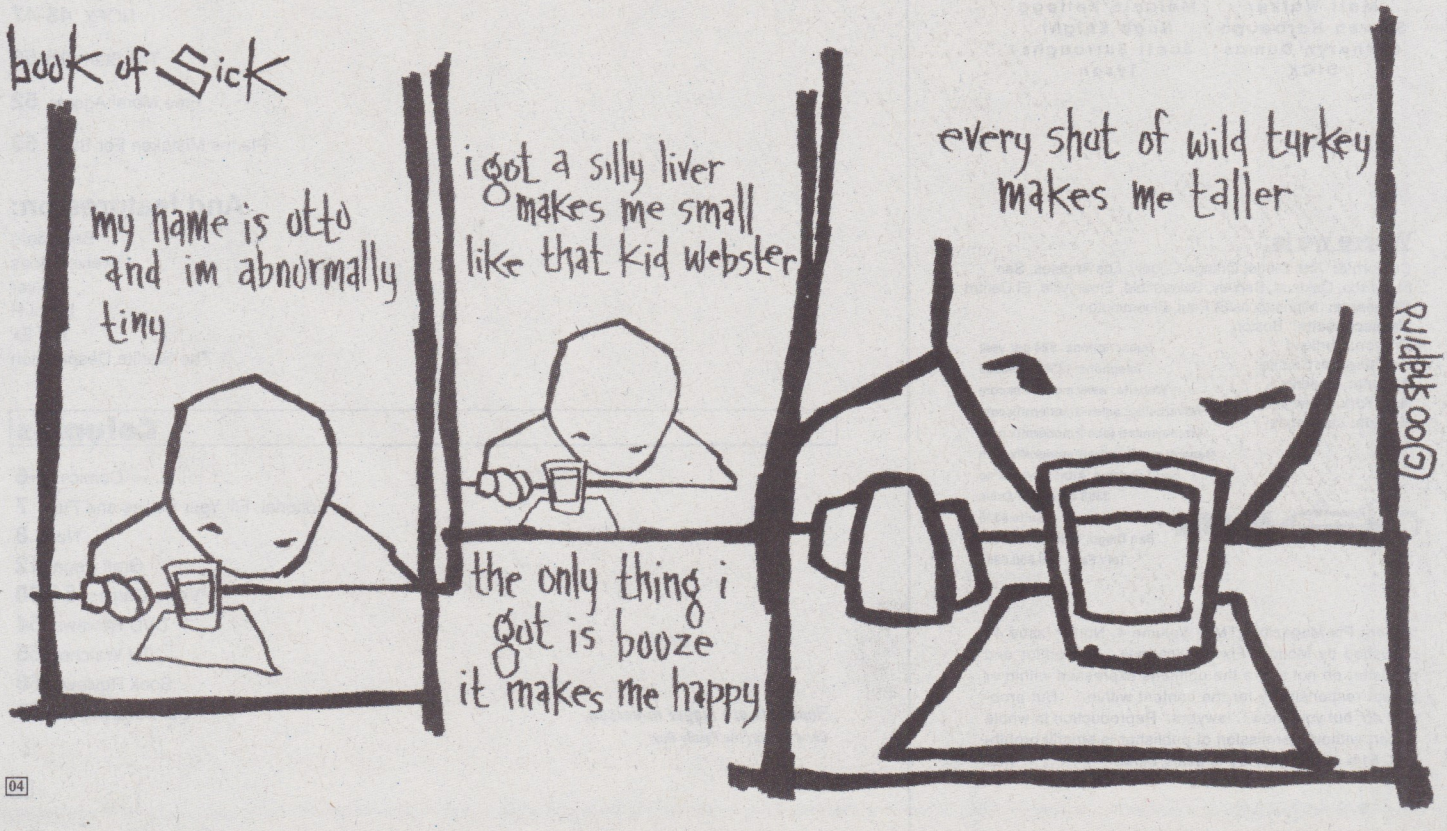

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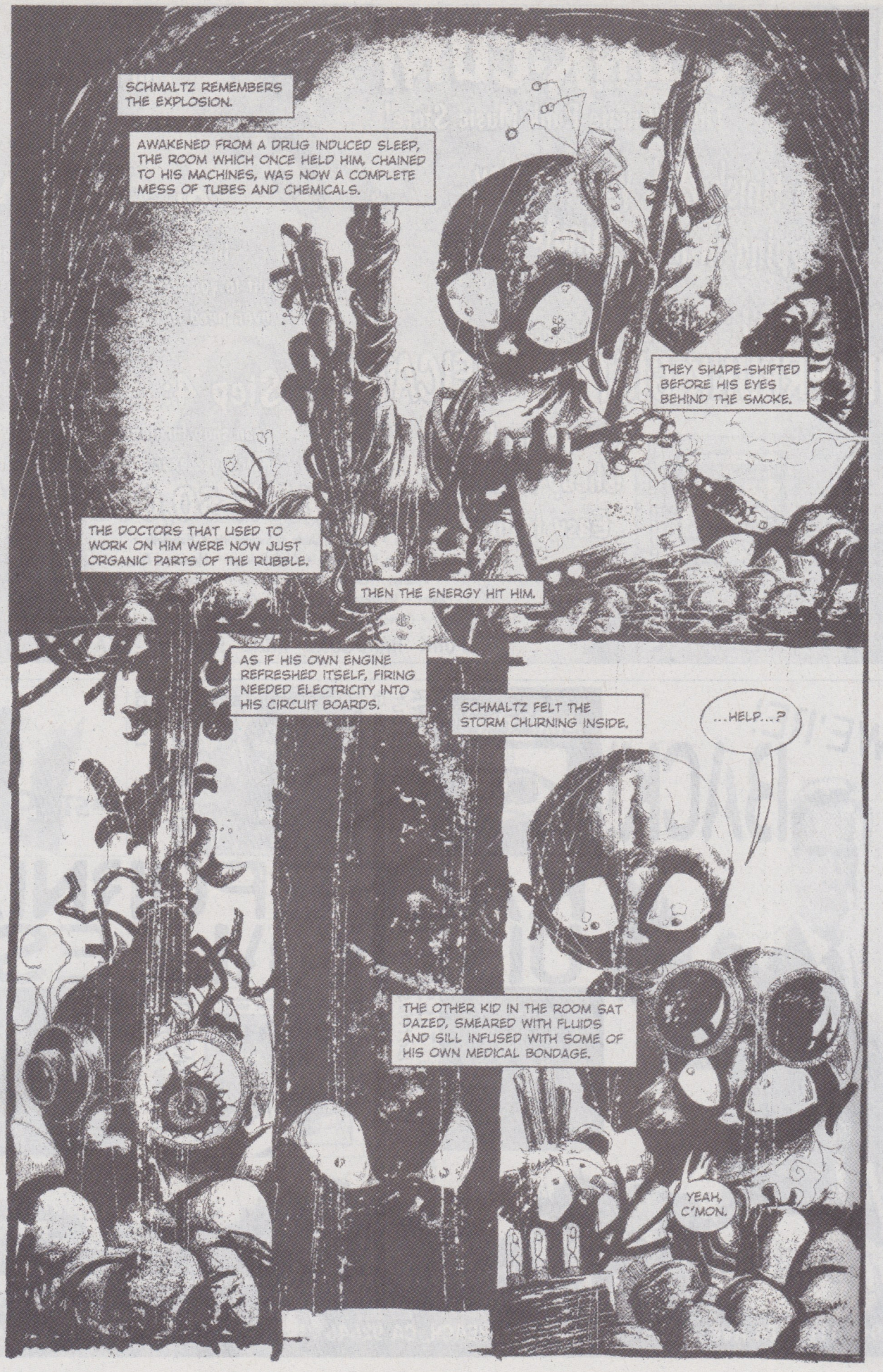

Fill Your Bellies and Fuck

by Dick

The potato is the saddest food. A staple of the poor. Too heavily relied upon (just ask Ireland about their lumpers). A starchy heart-sized lump feeding a critical population explosion. I hate the potato: the perfect symbol of the subjugation of the poor by the ruling class. Grown in the dirt, tied to the land like serfs. Poor little brown guys stuck living in the dirt like half this fucking planet. The poor were tricked into becoming mass potato eaters to cheaply feed them and cause them to multiply. Stuff people with food and they breed. The more food, the more people. It's the simplest cause and effect to understand. An increase in column A results in a similar increase in column B. Similarly, once the breeding increases, resulting in an increase in people, the rich get more cheap or free labor. More humans, more cheap laborers. More cheap labor, greater production, greater profits, greater pollution, greater strain on resources. Having children feeds the machinery of the ruling elite. I'm not suggesting a ban on potatoes, on more people, yes, but not outright on potatoes. Potatoes aren't the only culprit. There's corn, which results in plenty of evil on its own, and rice, the starchy potato equivalency of the Far East. What do they do at weddings? Throw rice at the bride and groom saying, "Here! Go fill your bellies and fuck."

In essence, humans want to fill their bellies and fuck. It's what we do. It's how we survive, but filling bellies and fucking is big money. It's business, and our hunger for food and fuck is exploited every day in every way. It's like in the movie "They Live" when Roddy Piper puts the glasses on, then Wonderland fades away and reality is laid bare. Billboards transform into blatant messages that read "obey" and "consume" and one in particular shows a reclined female donning a bikini. She smiles alluringly, but the glasses reveal the advertisements true message, "BREED!" Walk down the streets today and the billboards are all calling for breeding. Take the Energizer ad showing a mother pushing a stroller holding four babies. The sign reads "Keep going!" as the wicked specter of a rabbit, a symbol of fertility, lumes up from behind her. It's none too subtle. The corporations and the government don't need the subliminal techniques employed by the aliens in "They Live." They come right out and tell us to fill our bellies and fuck. They do it with the ads on TV. They do it with questionable scientific studies. They do it because they got to do it. It's for the war. The only reason a fetus is precious is because it might grow up someday to die fighting a senseless war in some remote desert. The military needs babies for their endless war. They don't have the robots to fight for us yet. They need a harvest of humans. More every year. But you need loads and loads of cheap food to keep the population growing. If the rats don't feed, then the rats won't breed, and they keep us feeding. They keep us breeding. They keep those bellies filled, and they do it well.

Fill your bellies and fuck. It wasn't long after September 11th 2001 that several national magazine's and television shows started running articles and having expert guests lecture about how women will regret not having babies in favor of focusing on their careers. Time Magazine started it off in April of 2002, seven short months after Bush declared war without end, they run the cover story, "making time for baby." (Also on the cover, coincidentally, is the lead for another article called "Middle East: Bush's Big Gamble", as if what Bush has done in the Middle East is akin to walking into a casino and dropping a hundred on red).

Time's "Making Time For baby" cover story, which is based on scientific research, suggests women will have deep regrets about focusing on their career rather than getting knocked up young and pumping out some little 'uns. They even had an online poll to go along with the article that asked: "Are U.S. women waiting too long to have children?" Currently, 70.6% of poll-takers say, "YES! Those American broads are waiting too long." Is it coincidence? A scientific study shows, seven months after the Al Qaida attacks against America, that women need to begin breeding much earlier in life. So early, in fact, that they may just need to forego getting an education at one of them damn liberal Universities. Keep 'em young, dumb and full of cum. It's the Republican-American Taliban's way! They need more babies for their Mid-east gambling problem.

Is obesity a problem in America? No. Can McDonald's be sued for making people sick with their putrid food that's nothing more than cheap stuffing for the poor to keep their bellies full and their fucking out of control? No! They advertise their food on the television, on billboards, in national magazines. They fetishize their food. You never see fat people eating a Big Mac. The only people in the land of advertising who eat Big Macs are people you want to fuck. They're hot. They're in perfect physical shape. Shirtless construction workers with rippling abs and pecs of iron. The women on TV eat their Carl's Jr. Six Dollar Burgers and they look as if they're building to an orgasm. It's fucking and eating, right there on the TV screen in primetime. Is it pornography or is it food? She rides that mechanical bull, undulating her hips to the rhythm of Foghat's "Slow Ride" as she jams a condiment oozing burger into her moist and parted lips. It's hot stuff. Her flat and lean midsection is exposed. Right there, boys. You see that taut belly? You see all that smooth tanned skin? Right there. That's where you plant your seed. Hang a fetus right in there behind that sexy tummy. Your child will be fed well, half-pound Angus Burgers everyday for your little seedling. I'm in the mood, the rhythm is right - Move to the music, we can roll all night - Oooh, oooh, slow ride - oooh, oooh...

Food is politics. Food is rule over the poor. Food generates cheap labor. The more food. The more people. The more people, the more cheap labor. The more cheap labor, the more the ruling class can consolidate their power through increasing urban crime, imprisonment and starting wars. The end of the world will be a battle fucking royale between rice and potatoes. The Americans stuffed with Russets and the Chinese filled to bursting with rice, then it's war. Lead right into it through the stupidity of our hungerless breeding. Our bellies and our genitals on the easily held leash of the rich. But before we get to the battle of 'potato vs. rice' we have to cut through this 'Muslim vs. Christian' bullshit. Do I have an idea to deal with that? Oh, yes. It's non-sequitur conclusion time!

Christians have this belief if they're persecuted and killed because of their faith in Jesus Christ that they'll go shooting off straight to heaven lickety split, and Muslims have this belief that if they die giving the infidels what for that they too go off just as lickety split, oddly enough, to the very same heaven as the Christians. This gives me my idea. It'd seem mutually beneficial if all Christians just line the streets of Mecca during what ever holy time has the Muslims reverent and bothered enough to be in old holy-town. So you got all these Christians lining the streets and all these Muslims doing whatever they do in their funny little holy land. The Muslims strap on bombs and blast the Christian's and their own precious eternal souls clean out from their pulpy, oozing bodies, and if you're a Christian, zip! you go straight to heaven and if you're a Muslim, zing! you got the sure-shot at the pearly gates. It's a fantastic suicide bombing two for one trip to paradise. Christians and Muslims both win! Kaboom! Kaboom! Kaboom! Kaboom! Kaboom! Mecca will be littered with hundreds of millions of twitching death-nerve corpse chunks and the line up at Heaven's gate will be longer than at the bank of Florida on pension check day.

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by PR!

Jack Spadaro, an engineer, used to be the head of the National Mine Health and Safety Academy, which is [a branch of the Department of Labor], and specializes in training mining inspectors. Unfortunately, after he blew the whistle on an investigation into **a major environmental disaster**... a disaster estimated to be 25 times the size of the Exxon Valdez spill... he was fired. The actual incident occurred in October 2000, when 300 million gallons of coal slurry - thick pudding-like waste from mining operations - flooded land, polluted rivers and destroyed property in Eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. The slurry contained some of the worst hazardous chemicals you wouldn't want to touch, including arsenic and mercury. The coal slurry had been contained in an enormous reservoir owned by the Massey Energy Company. One night, the heavy liquid broke through the bottom of the reservoir, flooded the abandoned coal mines below it and then out into the freshwater streams. During his investigation, it came out that there had been a previous spill in 1994 at the same impoundment, and an engineer working for the company said the problem had not been fixed, and that both he and the company knew another spill was virtually inevitable. "It would have been expensive to find another site. And I think they were willing to take the risk... It was a certainty," says Spadaro on the news show 60 Minutes. Then, "the Bush administration came in and the scope of our investigation was considerably shortened, and we were told to wrap it up in a few weeks." Spadaro says his investigating team wanted to cite the company for eight violations, but after Bush's administration came into the picture, Massey Energy was only cited for two violations, and had to pay $110,000 – not too big of a headache for the fifth largest mining company in America.

When 75 people spend over six hours arranging **1,100 flag-draped coffins** 1 in front of the Lincoln Memorial, you'd think that the news would cover it. Surprisingly, the protest, arranged in part by a $20k donation to the Iraq War Memorial Coalition, was missing from major news agencies like CNN or the Washington Post, although it was covered by the Washington Times and Yahoo!.

An interesting Flash movie on some of the peculiar aspects of 9/11 (read: **9/11 conspiracy theory's**) is over at www.freedomunderground.org/memory-hole/pentagon.php If you think there was more to that horrific day then some dicks from Saudi Arabia with bad intentions, it's worth a watch.

While this is a bit dated, it can still be useful for you cheap bastards out there. Go to Walmart, Target or any of those type of stores and buy the 'Dakota Digital' digital camera. For about $11, you get a 25-shot 1.2 megapixel digital camera that is intended to be processed where you bought it. It's actually not a very good deal at first glance; the actual picture quality is less then your average disposable film camera, it's pretty expensive to develop and you can't remove any of the digital pictures off yourself (because, of course, they want your money and need you to bring the camera back). Funny story, tho, as John over at www.maushammer.com/systems/dakotadigital/DakotaDigital.html has been diligently working on making it easy to remove and empty the camera's memory, successfully bypassing the need for you to return it and **giving you a 1.2 megapixel camera for about $20**.

As reported in the Seattle Times, a storage area at a now-defunct nuclear power plant on the shores of the Caspian Sea contains containers of spent atomic fuel with enough plutonium to make **dozens of bombs**... 330 tons total, which contain more than 3 tons of plutonium. According to Nuclear Threat Initiative, the fuel has been sitting for so long and was so lightly irradiated to begin with that it is no longer radioactive enough to be "self-protecting" against theft. Another words, "thieves could load it into a boat and take it away without necessarily receiving radiation doses that would immediately be incapacitating." Kazakhstan is one of five countries sharing the Caspian Sea with Iran, which is suspected of seeking nuclear weapons. "No work is being done on the dual-use casks because no funding is coming from the United States. And we cannot understand why. This is not an example of good cooperation," said Irina Tajibayeva, executive director of the Kazakhstan government's Center for the Safety of Nuclear Technologies.

The previous story reminds me of the missing Russian suitcase nukes. Remember that? No? Well, in 1997, before terrorists were the big scary menace, Sixty Minutes broadcast ed a report which featured former Russian National Security Adviser Aleksandr Lebed, who claimed that the Russian military had lost track of more than **100 suitcase-sized nuclear bombs.** 2 According the Lebed, these devices were made to look like suitcases, could be detonated by one person within half an hour and could kill up to 100,000 people. In 2000, congress heard testimony from Lebed, former Russian scientist and environmental advisor Alexei Yablokov and Soviet ex-colonel and Stanislav Lunev, who backed up the claims. The most interesting (and scary) part of the hearing was when Lunev stated that nuclear suitcase bombs may have been pre-positioned in America, employed in a decapitating Russian attack against key communications and military facilities. Colonel Lunev claimed that the Russian military and intelligence services still regard the United States as the enemy and consider war with the U.S. as "inevitable."

Fuck, since this months 01101100111001001100100 is so nuke heavy, let's go over some **fun facts about US nuclear weapons**. Impress your friends and scare your mom with twelve great nuggets:

[1] *Total number of nuclear missiles built:* 67,500
[2] *Total number of nuclear bombers built:* 4,680
[3] *Total number and types of nuclear warheads and bombs built:* 70,000+/65 types
[4] *Peak number of nuclear warheads and bombs in the stockpile/year:* 32,193/1966
[5] *Number currently in the stockpile:* 10,600 (7,982 deployed, 2,700 hedge/contingency stockpile)
[6] *Number of nuclear warheads requested by the Army in 1956 and 1957:* 151,000
[7] *Number of nuclear bombs lost in accidents and never recovered:* 11
[8] *States with the largest number of nuclear weapons:* New Mexico (2,450), Georgia (2,000), Washington (1,685), Nevada (1,350), and North Dakota (1,140)
[9] *Number of secret Presidential Emergency Facilities built for use during/after a nuclear war:* 75+
[10] *Currency stored at the Mount Pony facility for use after a nuclear war:* $2,000,000,000+
[11] *Projected operational U.S. strategic nuclear warheads and bombs after full enactment of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty in 2012:* between 1,700-2,200
[12] *Additional strategic and non-strategic warheads not limited by the treaty that the U.S. military wants to retain as a "hedge" against unforeseen future threats:* 4,900

According to The Daily Standard, the doctors at Netherlands' Groningen University Hospital are allowed to **euthanize children** under the age of 12, if they believe the paitents suffering is intolerable or if they have an incurable illness. In a British study in 1997 by medical journal, 45% of neo-natologists and 31% of pediatricians had euthanized infants. 21% of infant deaths by euthanasia took place without the request or consent of the parents.

As the United Kingdom's newspaper, The Guardian, first reported, an unexplained rise in carbon dioxide in our atmosphere for two years running has raised fears that **the world may be on the brink of runaway global warming**. 3 Measurements of CO2 in the atmosphere have been continuous for almost 50 years at Mauna Loa Observatory. The "runaway greenhouse effect" is where, as the icecaps melt, less sunlight is reflected back into space from ice and snow, and bare rocks begin to absorb more heat, and the planet gets hotter, melting more ice, etc. A senior researcher at University of Reading's Department of Meteorology, said: "If this is a change [and not a fluke], it will be very significant." End.

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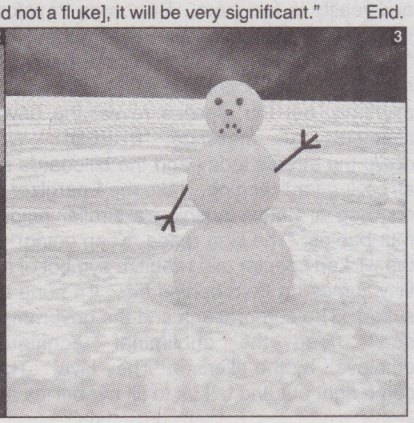
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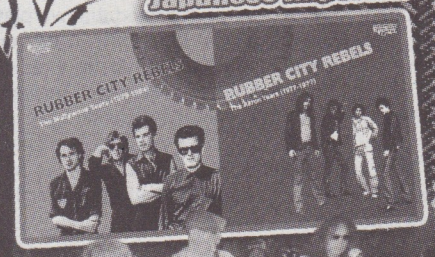

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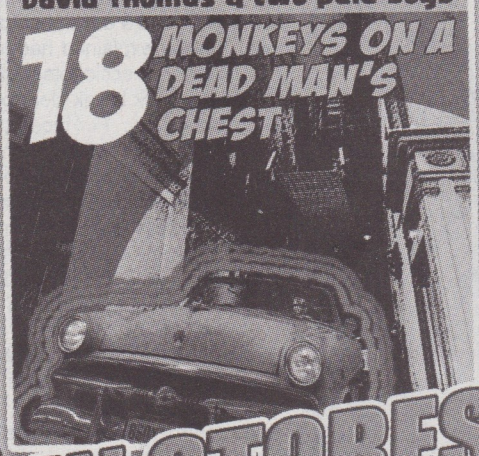

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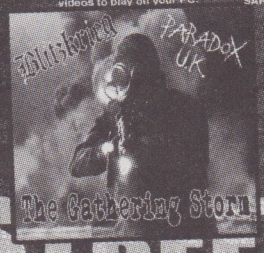

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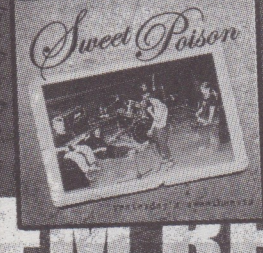

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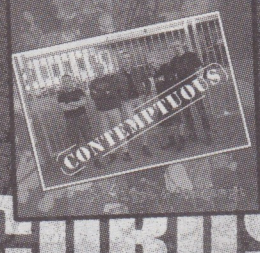

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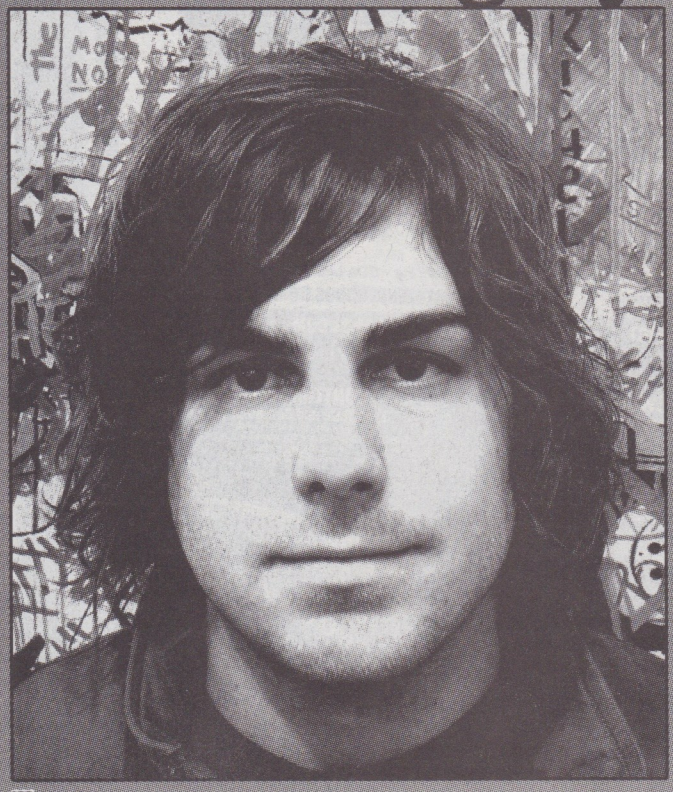
DaveSingley



by Thom Cooper

I have been to a couple of shows by artist Dave Singley and always found his art to really draw people in. Resonating well in the environments in which it is shown, it makes people smile, and in some cases invites them to get involved. I called Dave and set up a time, next thing I knew I was on my way over with a twelve pack and a deck of cards. When I arrived Dave was busy re-stringing his guitar that he explained had just been broken by a friend. Dave said that he understood that accidents happen and said he wasn't pissed at all (even when he saw the neck break clear off the body). Nice guy. I suggested that we play a game of hi-low. For those of you who don't know what that is, I'm sorry you are that lame. We split the entire twelve pack in thirty minutes. At the end, we poured the ass-end of all the beers into one can and played rock-paper-scissors for who would drink this half can of warm, spit ridden, filth. Confidently I started playing knowing that in 3 rounds, I'd be laughing my ass off as I watched Dave wretch this can of sick shit. Well, that sure as hell didn't happen. All I can say is, it was fucked up. Who's lame now? With a twelve pack in our collective selves I decided it would be a great time to ask some questions.

A lot of your art seems to reflect day-to-day life, what motivates you?
People and semantics inspire me; therefore everyday I end up with that much more in my head, as material, and then I just look for the resources to get it out. I can't control my creative side. The business side of me tries to ensure that the public will see this stuff.

How do you get your 'stuff' into the public?
You gotta schmooze (haha). One thing I'm working on is this art collective by the name of Lasso. Basically it's a bunch of my friends and I who make a lot of art and want to get it out there. My angle is strength in numbers, because there is a lot of individual talent involved. There are millions of communities all across America with the same dynamic: local bands, co-op houses that smell like bulk grains, street kids, preps, kids who pay a lot of money for vintage looking clothing.

You seem to have a lot of stuff to say, but your art is so simple and often humorous.
It's just that dry humor that points to real things. People watch, and you can see how funny we are. The best thing in the world is to be able to make fun of yourself. Almost.

What do you think about today's art scene?
I don't know man, it just seems like hype and popularity spoil good things. Certain things get played out, like in music.

What do you think of the relationship between art and music?
They inspire each other. I'm doing the album artwork for this band Innaway right now, and I've been listening to their pre-mixed recording while getting the pieces sorted out, so everything has that atmosphere.

Who else have you found to be influential?
There is this guy David Shrigley who kinda spun me in another direction after I stumbled across his book some years ago. Our names are practically the same. Pretty funny stuff; but it's easy to get in a formula when you make that kind of work and I started to feel like he recycles some of his jokes. Anyway I took what I wanted from him but I like to put a lot more emphasis on aesthetics. David Hockney inspires me in that way, I can't get over how perfect his drawings seem to me. I think it is important to be aware of the people that influence you. In most cases we have yet to do anything better than our pioneers in art and music.

Do you think your art will be more popular after your dead?
Only if James Lipton is allowed to speak on my behalf.

You've done some art shows at the Glass House in Pomona, one with Les Savy Fav, and another one with the Yeah Yeah Yeah's. What else have you done, and where can we find you in the future?
Those Glass House shows are compliments of this shaker Mariko, and they go by the name of Bridgin' the Gap. BTG III is coming up November 12th and 13th with TV on the Radio, The Faint, and Le Tigre. I just found out I'm gonna be showing work at All Tomorrows Parties the big music festival at the Queen Mary. I made tour shirts for Dance Disaster Movement, and we terrorized the coast with Peaches. I'm in another show at Koo's In Long Beach called Manufactured Inspirato. Other than that look forward to Innaway's Freshman release which has yet to be titled. I'm doing all things visual for that band. I have lots of hopes for them and for my art collective which is online.

Is there any last thing you'd like to say?
Yeah, um, just remember that you are only as cool as the clothes you wear.

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THE GRAFF PAGE

BLUBBER COLORS

by M. Young

Blubber Colors is a relatively new brand of spray paint that is the first American brand of paint made by and intended for artists. Typically, artists complain of the traditional types of aerosol paint because it isn't made for art. Rather, the paint is made for industrial and around the house uses, so the artists say it's very thin and runny. In June, Blubber Colors came out with three premier colors; **Blubber Blue**, **Aero's Winter Fresh Green**, and **Quake's Purple Haze**. Artists from the Aerosol Art Association put in over two and a half years of research and development to turn Blubber into a reality.

Each color that is released is created and endorsed by a particular aerosol artist and reflects that artists style and personality. This is a thicker, more vibrant fast drying paint with less runs and a high coverage area.

In addition to releasing three colors quarterly, Blubber is coming out with limited edition cans like **Dondi White**, and **Duro Black** in 2005. Other products that they are offering are things like collectible coloring books done by artists like **Pursue** and **Giant** with Blubber crayons that match their custom paint line.

www.Blubber-Colors.com

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NINE

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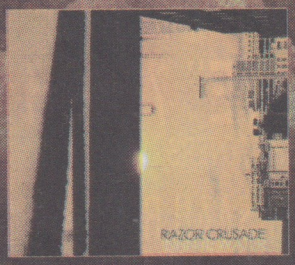

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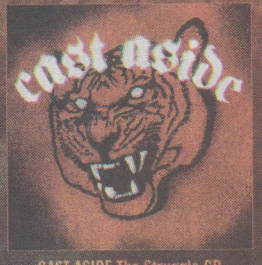

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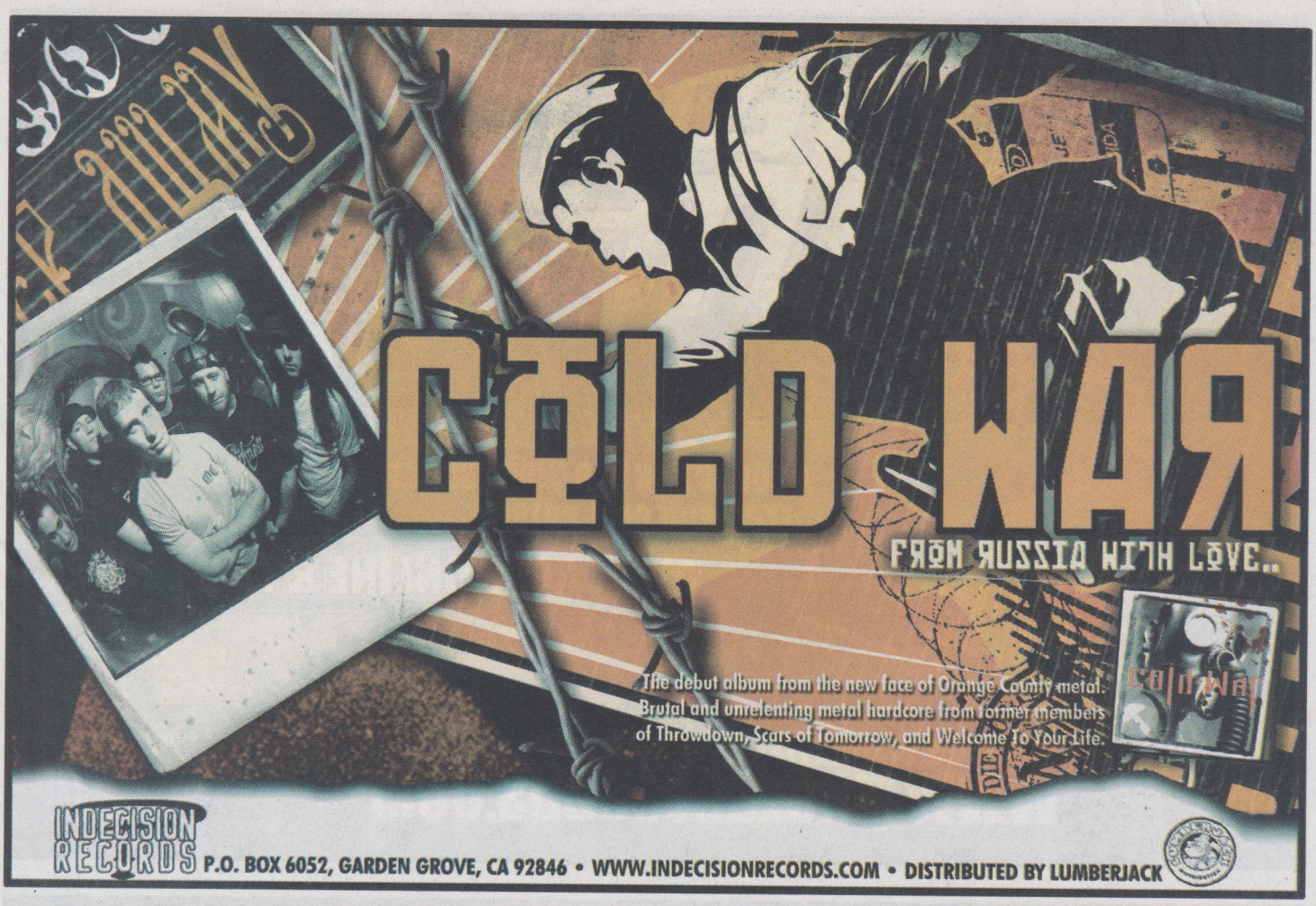

Let it Burn
the expanding Universe

Founded on the shores of Jersey in 2001, LET IT BURN are set to let their second full length record "The Expanding Universe" free. Working with producer Matt Squire (THE EXPLOSION, THRICE, NORTH STAR) has strengthened their rock and roll assault, twisting sounds of traditional 80's punk and 90's Brit rock into a new and exciting punk rock evolution. The album's title track was the first song written for the LP, so it makes sense that it's lyrics also double as the main theme tying each track together, that everyone and everything around you is constantly growing away from you (hence the expanding part). Throughout the next 10 songs LET IT BURN gear up to answer that question with an unrelenting fury. As one of the hardest working bands to rise from the pile in quite a while, LET IT BURN have been relentlessly touring both the US and abroad, with releases out on Coalition and Doghouse Records, and now Chunksaah Records.

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by Campbell

Think of all the bands that you used to listen to ten years ago. I choose not to share my list, but it is fairly safe to say that a lot of them are probably gearing up for their big "Greatest Hits" album since... well, they've been around for a decade. Fortunately, the Canadian punk rockers in Belvedere are a noteworthy exception to this "Old-Fogie Rock Star Rule." Since forming in 1995 Belvedere has been around the block and tattooed their name on the hearts of the masses on four continents while releasing as many full-length albums. Judging from the span of 1998's "Because No One Stopped Us" to 2004's "Fast Forward Eats the Tape" they appear to mean business.

Perfecting harmony among punk rhythms with atonal stylings and mixing familiar roots with a new, aggressive flavor can only mean one thing: "Punk" is at it again. And it's been right upstairs in Canada the whole time. For "Fast Forward Eats the Tape" Belvedere's latest release on Union 2112 Records, the four-piece outfit has plotted a new course where classic know-how embraces the ingenious twists characterizing some of the favorite "punk" bands - past and present. Slight nods to Kid Dynamite, Rise Against, 88 Fingers Louie and Strike Anywhere do not go unnoticed.

Belvedere has shared the stage with such artists as Bad Religion, Good Riddance, Strung Out and BigWig. After touring the U.S. and Canada several times, including four stints on various Warped Tours, Belvedere has truly worked hard to craft what their label has deemed to be "the band's best work to date." Plus, their video (which can be found on the label's web site) for "Slaves to the Pavement" is a throwback to "The Usual Suspects" - probably my choice for a movie-to-music video adaptation. Pushing the limits of a pioneering, aggression-meets-punk fusion, the release embodies a near-perfect hybrid that is as refreshing to the senses as it is musically-sound.

www.belvederepunk.com

1998 "Because No One Stopped Us" (Hourglass)
2000 "Angels Live in My Town" (Hourglass [Canada], Jump Start [U.S.])
2001/2002 "'Twas Hell Said Former Child" (Union 2112 [Canada], Jump Start [U.S.])
2003 "Hometown Advantage" Split w/ Downway (Union 2112)
2004 "Fast Forward Eats the Tape" (Union 2112)

by John Adams

"The goal is to define a sound, so that when our band is done we can say: We created this." That's what Twelve Tribes singer Adam Jackson professed about why his band puts out records, and that's also the reason the band spent nearly two years in the basement of their shared home crafting a sound for their new record that is original, hard-hitting, and all their own. Lurking around in a musty basement was only the half it, much of the band's time was spent on the road touring with the likes of Poison The Well, Eighteen Visions, and Every Time I Die. In addition to an impressive touring resume, they also have a high profile manager, Howard Jones of Killswitch Engage. "He's originally from Dayton, OH and I've known him since I was about 15 years old" said Jackson, "It's important that you surround yourself with people you trust in the music business. It makes the business end a lot easier to deal with".

"The Rebirth of Tragedy" is the long awaited new release. Recorded at Trax East in South River, NJ earlier this year, it is also the Dayton, OH five-piece's Ferret Records debut. The CD comes out swinging and delivers a consistent blend of well charged emotional hardcore and metal. The ratio of melody and madness shifts a bit from track to track, but the intensity is always there. With single string segments that bulldoze through your speakers, full rich chords that ring out with every incessant strum, and a bone rattling bass/rhythm section that puts a solid punctuation on every riff, Twelve Tribes just "bring it" with an intense level of focus.

Lyrically Jackson does a fine job of floating from a hip-hop-ish shout, to an intense scream, to some very competent singing. When he sings "If I could have it all, it wouldn't be enough" in "Venus Complex", the unexplainable feeling of emptiness he must have felt while penning such a line is easily felt. That track was also the choice for the band's first music video that is currently being aired on such prime time music outlets as MTV2's Headbanger's Ball, Fuse's Uranium and Music Choice. The band takes cues from the likes of Poison the Well, The Deftones, and even Candiria, but do a great job of dressing up their sound as to avoid being a clone of any other artist or particular scene.

www.twelvetribesMusic.com

2004 - The Rebirth of Tragedy (Ferret)
2001 - Instruments (Eulogy)
1999 - As Feathers To Flowers To Petals To Wings (Eulogy)

WASHINGTON - October 25, 2004

The FBI reported today that there were an all-time record 755,186 arrests for Marijuana in 2003 - vastly exceeding the 597,026 arrests for all violent crimes combined. As in past years, the vast majority - 88% - of Marijuana arrests were for simple possession, not sale or manufacture.

The new arrest report came eight days before voters across the U.S. would consider a variety of measures to reform Marijuana laws.

"With Marijuana arrests exceeding 750,000 a year, it's safe to say that the drug war isn't preventing people from using Marijuana," said Robert Kampia, executive director of the Marijuana Policy Project in Washington, D.C. "It's time to acknowledge this reality by taxing and regulating Marijuana. A responsible system of regulation will do a better job of keeping Marijuana away from kids and end the pointless persecution of adults who use Marijuana responsibly."

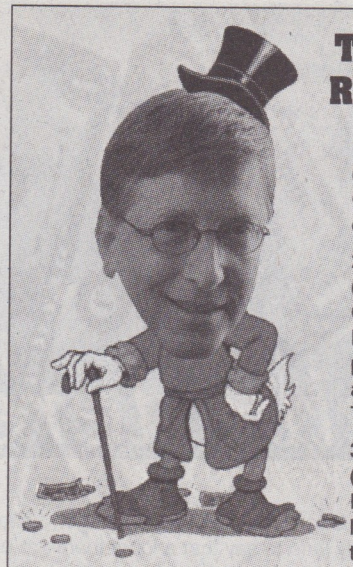
Kampia noted that, while failing to curb Marijuana use, prohibition continues to cause tragedies like the death of Jonathan Magbie, a quadriplegic medical Marijuana patient who died last month in a Washington, D.C., jail while serving a 10-day sentence for Marijuana possession.

by Sebastian U.

Hailing from Modesto, California, the band was originally formed by singer/guitarist David Woody as a three piece in 1993. In the ten plus years that they've been together they've made sure to take full advantage of their local resources. Jason Lytle, front man for fellow Modesto indie rockers Grandaddy, recorded their first album "Eventually Something Cool Will Happen," in 1998. The album was released on Devil in the Woods, a label also based out of Modesto. They have since relocated from the Central Valley to Los Angeles. However, Devil in the Woods has continued to put out all of their albums, including their fourth and latest, "Let It All Fall Down." For the last decade Fiver has been continually winning over hearts and ears with their beautiful brand of fuzzy pop. Now as a five piece, they combine Woody's delicately layered and breathy vocals with the sweet harmonies of bassist Amy Metcalf and keyboardist Lauren Singleton. The result sometimes gives the vocals an ethereal vibe reminiscent of Stereolab, or the softer side of Imperial Teen. When I first put in the album I spent the first couple of listens damn near banging my head against the wall trying to think, "Who does this sound like?" It felt familiar all the time, but not always in the same ways. The quick minute and half long opening track, "Last Song (First)," takes a turn into a very Badly Drawn Boy-ish arrangement with piano and what seems like soft synthesized horns. Sometimes I hear a more subdued Jeremy Enigk, complete with the "I thought you were from the west coast what the hell kind of accent is that" eccentricity. Other times Woody comes off sounding like how I imagine Ben Gibbard would underwater. For those of you worried about it being too pretty and dreamy, don't fret, Fiver isn't syrupy sweet all the way through. They avoid advancing sonic tooth decay by balancing out the sugar with edgier elements like fuzzed out guitar jabs, and commanding, at times dancey rhythms. Midway through the third track, "Scared, Not Scared," the bouncy bassline gets cut into by a wave of fuzzed out guitar and feedback. The tenth track, "They Hardly Know," reminds me a lot of a Gay Dad song, "Dinosaur," only a little bit more fragile. Sure, they borrow a little bit from here and there, but their influences are so abundant and agreeable that it doesn't matter. You should have been giving them the attention that a ten year old band of their caliber deserves all along.

www.fivermusic.com

2004 - Let It All Fall Down (Devil In The Woods)
2002 - Here It Comes (Devil In The Woods)
2000 - Strings For Satellites (Devil In The Woods)



Top 10 Riche$t Bitche$

1. William H. Gates ($58.7 bil)
Cofounder of Microsoft, home of Windows and the XBox.

2. Warren Edward Buffett ($41.0 bil)
Currently ceo at Berkshire Hathaway, an insurance company (Geico, etc) and is also a director at Coca-Cola and The Washington Post.

3. Lawrence Joseph Ellison ($26 bil)
Founder of Oracle, second largest software company in the world.

4. Karl Albrecht ($23 bil)
The cofounder of Aldi, a chain (6,500 stores) of grocery markets in Germany.

5. Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Alsaud (21.5 bil)
$10 billion stake in Citigroup is among his other investments. Nephew of a Saudi king.

6. S. Robson Walton ($20.1 bil)
Oldest son of Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart; CEO of company.

7. Paul Gardner Allen ($20 bil)
Microsoft cofounder, owns the Seattle Seahawks and Portland Trailblazers.

8. Jim C. Walton ($18.8 bil)
Youngest son of Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart chain (5,000 stores) and currently owner of Arvest, largest bank in Arkansas.

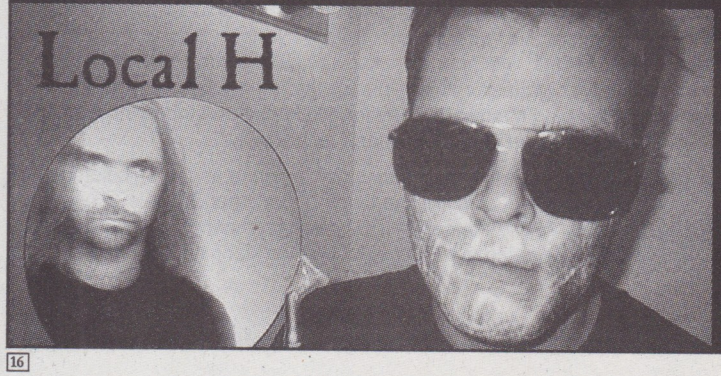
9. John T. Walton ($18.0 bil)
Middle son of Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, Vietnam vet.

10. Alice L. Walton (18.0 bil)
Daughter of Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, and founder of Llama Company, an investment banking firm.

By James Wright

Rawk N' Roll High School: Formed during high school in Zion, Illinois, Local H is the brainchild of Scot Lucas. After losing the band's bass player Scott took it upon himself to fill in the vacant bass slot by developing a unique way to play bass and guitar simultaneously, via a special guitar pick up. After releasing three albums, long-time drummer Joe Daniels exited the group and was replaced by Ex-Triplefastaction sticksman Brian St. Clair.

P.J, Where Are You?: Local H's latest offering "What Ever Happened to P.J Soles?" was named in tribute to the star of Rock and Rock High School. "I was just kind of interested in what happens to someone when they fade from public consciousness and even more so, the people who aren't stars but more of cult icons," says Lucas. "People know who she is but she's only important to a core group of people. I'm talking about people we don't get enough of. The only people we get is people like Ben Affleck and that sucks."



You're An Embarrassment: "I haven't talked to P.J but I read some kind of article where she said she was flattered [by the name of the record]," smiles Lucas. "As long as she's not embarrassed."

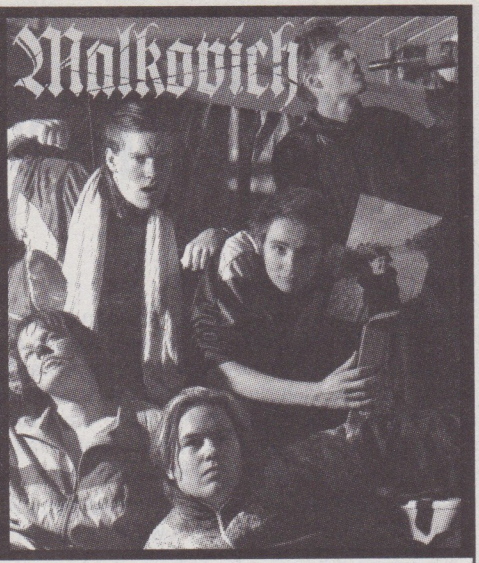
Please, No More California Songs: "One of things I like is that some of the best music is out of these smaller scenes like Minnesota, Georgia or now you have this thing happening in Omaha," says Scott about the album's first rocktastic lead single 'California Song'. "There is this huge vast land that both New York and L.A want to ignore and I can't think of too many L.A bands that are worth a shit. It kinda bums me out to see people gravitate towards these types of areas because that whole area just kinda gets on my nerves after a while."

Whipping Your Monkey Ass: Lucas is a huge David Chappelle fan and has no problems letting people know. "I like the episode where he plays video games with the kid who has cancer and he whips his monkey ass at street hoops," Lucas laughs. "I think the Second Season is about ten times better than the first, but if you haven't seen any of his stand-up comedy specials you should see that because that's where he's really great."

www.localh.com

2004 "What Ever Happened To P.J Soles?" (Studio E)
2002 "Here Comes the Zoo" (Palm)
1998 "Pack Up the Cats" (Polygram)
1996 "As Good as Dead" (Island)
1995 "Ham Fisted" (Island)

Malkovich



Home is: Amsterdam
Tours with: Give Up The Ghost, Swing Kids, Refused
Latest album: "A Criminal Record" (Reflections)
Web: iammalkovich.com

Guitars crank and climax, vocals scrape out a rocking yelp, and songs are titled, "020", "017", "021", "029", etc., because they think it's cleverly subversive. Band Quote: "We created a classical masterpiece dedicated to vultures, shaved pussies and total doom". Mashes Refused attitude into a garage rock crack party. Even if it's a bit abrasive, the guitars are wicked clever.

moving units

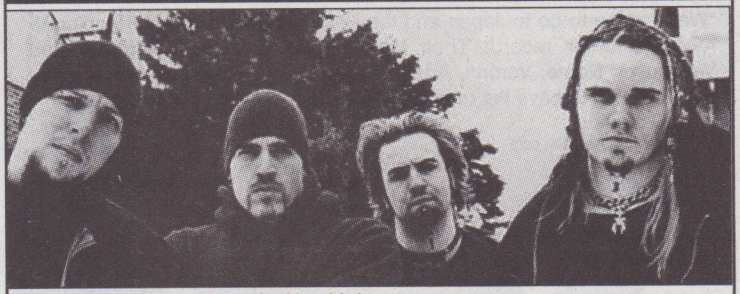
Home is: Los Angeles
Plays with: Chinese Stars, Kill Me Tomorrow
Latest album: "Dangerous Dreams" (Palm/Rx)
Web: movingunits.net

One of the dudes from Mission Of Burma used to be in a group called Moving Units back in the seventies. Moving Units circa 2004 are a three-piece dance rock band. They shit gold and have that gold turned into collectible lithographs available at their shows.

Del the funky homosapien

Born in: Oakland, baby!
Known from: Gorillaz, Hieroglyphics
Upcoming album: "11th Hour"
Web: hieroglyphics.com

New album comes out next month... do you really need to know anything else?



DRY KILL LOGIC

Home is: New York
Tours with: Fear Factory, Kittie, Skindred, Nonpoint
Latest album: "The Dead And Dreaming" (Repossession)
Web: drykilllogic.com

This is the only nu-metal band thats worth a shit. The press kit blows a bunch of nonsense about them combining the ferocity of thrash and death metal (ha) with the lyrical relevance of punk and smatterings of melodic classic rock. DKL are none of the above. They are nu-metal. Deal with it. Whenever anyone says "nu-metal sux ass", I say, "Totally. Except for Dry Kill Logic."

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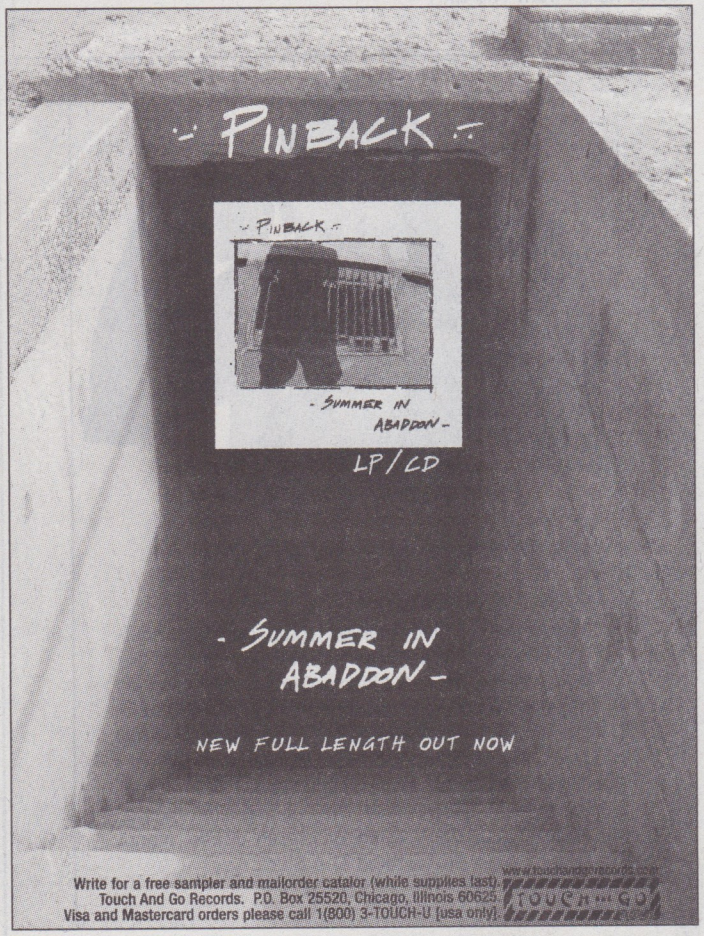
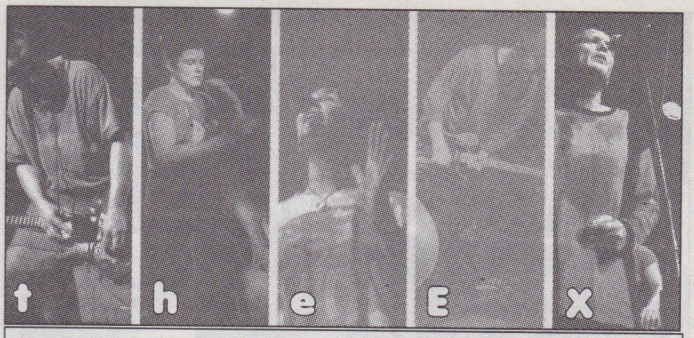
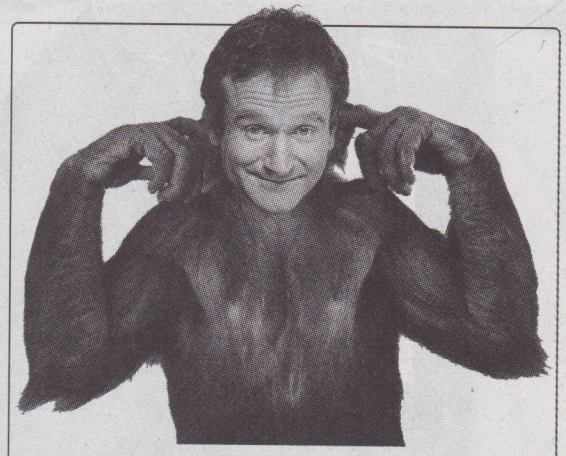




by Gordon Downs

On my twenty-fifth birthday, I got high off klonopins and Vanilla Coke and ended up verbally abusing some prick tour manager at the end of the night. Not exactly a noble or healthy way to celebrate an anniversary; but a semi-memorable evening nonetheless! Legendary punk luminaries, The Ex are celebrating their twenty-fifth year of making the band by releasing a dubious double LP, "Turn." These motherfuckers started kicking out the jams twenty-five years ago in Amsterdam, with all the goddamn pot, wooden shoes and Euro-angst that a teen could want at the time. Forming in 1979 and releasing their first EP, "All Corpses Smell The Same" in 1980, The Ex has released over seventeen albums in their twenty-five years of punking it up! Though their line-up has changed many, many motherfucking times, The Ex has always managed to hold down their punk aesthetic throughout the course of time, earning the respect and admiration from bands like Fugazi and Sonic Youth. Much like a Dutch version of The Clash, The Ex churned out propaganda and anarchy like a shit storm in the eighties, but found the nineties to be a bit more experimental. In 2000 they formed, recorded and toured with a twenty-member big band project called Ex Orkest. Their last two records, "Starters Alternators" and "Dizzy Spells" were both released via Chicago's, Touch & Go Records. Their latest release, "Turn" (also available via Touch & Go) is a rebel rousing rhythmic raucous! To put it simply: The Ex toured and kicked it with Chumbawamba back in the eighties. If that doesn't spell P-U-N-K to you...well then you probably have dyslexia or are illiterate. Get some help - from The Ex!

www.tgrec.com



Hairy comedian helps ACLU

(October 5, 2004 - New York)

The American Civil Liverties Union, or ACLU, hosted a huge entertainment benefit concert at the Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, raising more than $300,000 and featuring spoken word performances from the likes of Robin Williams, Mos Def, Paul Simon, Richard Gere, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Jake Gyllenhaal, Wyclef Jean, Patti Smith, Lou Reed, Lila Downs, Jessica Lange, Philip Glass, Tony Kushner, Sarah Jones, Nanci Griffith, Edie Brickell and The Black Keys.

the Starlite desperation

by Derek Meier

It used to be, once in a blue moon, an amazing rock band would come around, recalling the sounds of early garage and punk but still maintaining an original and exciting sound. Fast forward to 2004 and there's probably five playing in New York City every night. With the latest craze of the 70's garage rock supersound there are many bands releasing debut records and moving units at unstoppable rates. But then again, it has opened the flood gates and let the true masters let their art be known.

Rewind to 1996 and a town called Salinas, CA, a small (yet rumored to be an extremely dangerous) town, located just south of San Jose.

"I suppose if it was safer to leave the house I might not have stayed in and learned how to play music." Says vocalist / guitarist Dante Aliano, the crooning, dramatic front-man of this increasingly popular rock phenom.

The Starlite Desperation, not having many venues to choose from in the wild-west town of Salinas, quickly found their home in the San Francisco underground. They performed with the likes of local rock heroes, PeeChees, Vue and the VSS and soon released their debut record "...show you what a baby won't" a true rock n' roll record, badass and balls out (released on a then small, local underground record label GSL). The Starlite Desperation rocked it hard and spastic with emotion that moved and truly provoked the listener. Much in the way Social Distortion or the Misfits made you really pissed off but feeling great and almost relieved at the same time.

But then the band decided to make a break and head for Detroit Rock City.

"It made us break up." Says Aliano.

And that's just what happened. After releasing their second record in 1999 entitled, "Go Kill Mice", a record that could truly have opened the doors for this amazing rock-trio, the group disbanded and went their separate ways.

Another amazing band, gone and lost, no more great releases or provocative live shows...

After crashing (by request of course) 2003's CMJ / GSL showcase, at Lit Lounge in NYC, Dante Aliano took the stage with the newly reformed The Starlite Desperation, featuring Jeff Ehrenberg on drums with Dana Lacono and Casey Geisen rotating roles of bass and guitar. Now after a five year hiatus, the band has reformed, released a new EP, "Violate a Sundae" on Cold Sweat Records (Battles, Wives, Devendra Banhart) and is doing their first tour of the US in five years.

"We're going to go to Japan and the Phillipines and then we're going to record another record. Then we're going to play in Toronto and Vancouver, Rome, Verona, Australia, South by CMJ" says Aliano, obviously excited to have his baby back together.

www.starlitedesperation.com

Home is: New York
Tours with: Norma Jean, Evergreen Terrace, Story of the Year, Hey Mercedes
Latest album: "Coversations" (Trustkill)
Web: rosesareredmusic.com

One of the new hopes finding the middle ground between emotive screaming and melodic guitar indie rock. Powerful vocals layerd above saccharine sweet guitars and heartbreaking tempos. Their only flaw is their flavor of the day sound, but when their flavor is better than most, good attitudes and heavy touring should bring this band up.

Home is: Denmark
Tours with: Sick of it All, Unearth, Walls of Jericho, Heaven Shall Burn
Upcoming album:
"The Tracy Chapter" (Lifeforce)
Web: destinyonair.com

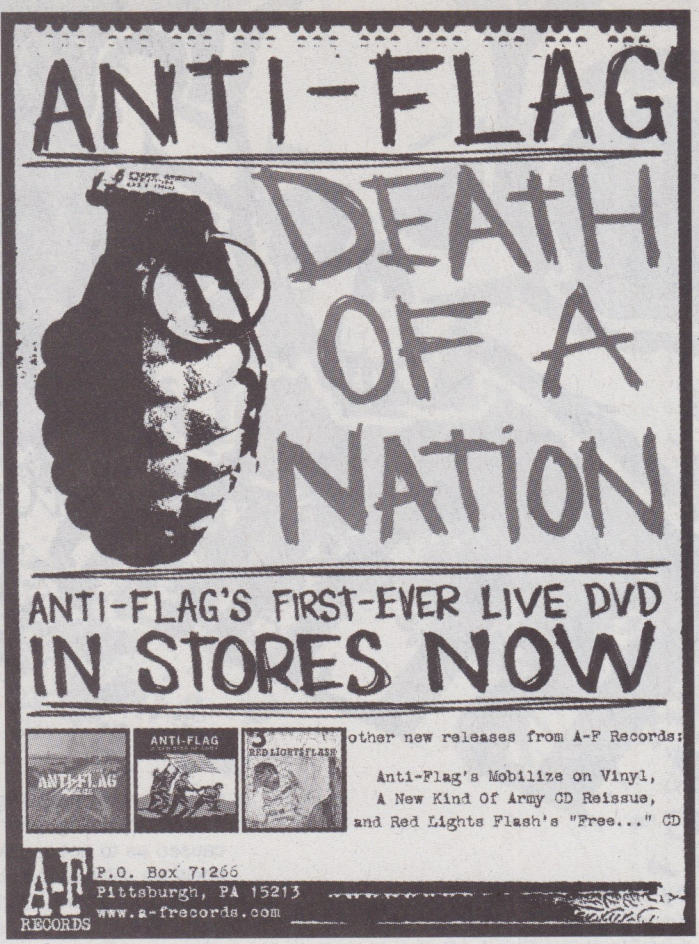
Bringing the metal hardcore meld from overseas, Destiny interjects some great melodies in the way of big choruses that are absolutely shattered by concussive breakdowns. The band started in 97 and has a grip of tours and few releases under its belt. Their newest is everything American metalcore has, with a dose of euro-melody.

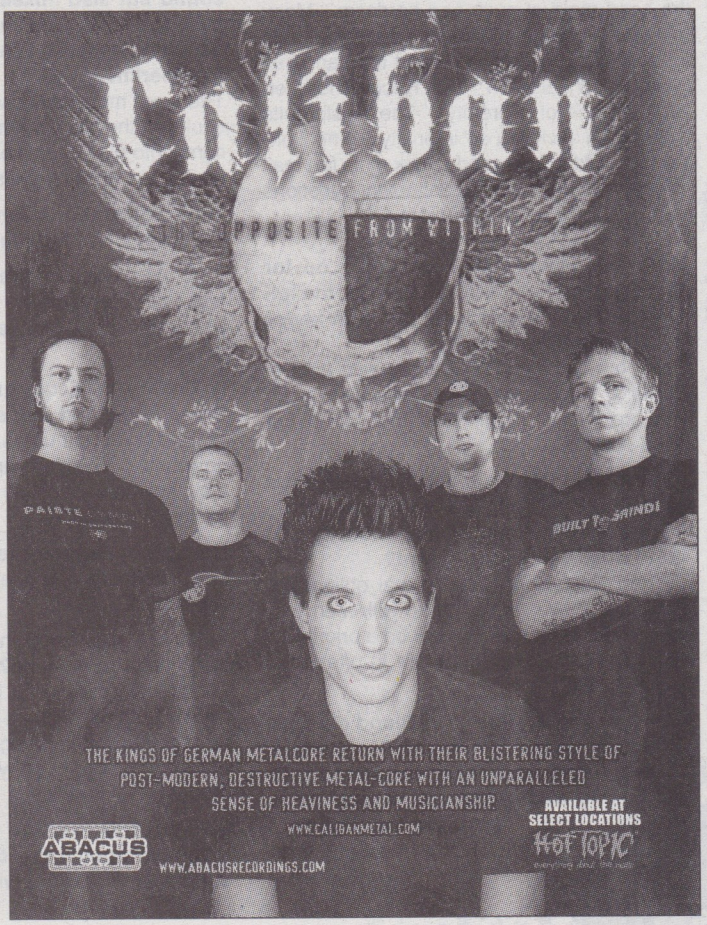
Spawned from: Hell's Vagina via Norway.
Eats: Baby orphans
Latest album: "The Grudge" (Earache)
Web: mortiis.com

Lives under bridges and makes stark, sterile techno that is entrancing. Scares small children and creates a labyrinth of keyboard driven music of an uncomfortable beauty. Skinny Puppy think he is 'creepy'. It's dark, operatic, orchestrated and deep. Think Gary Numan if his mom was raped by a troll.

Loiters around: Long Island
Opens for: Taking Back Sunday, Bayside, Fallout Boy
Latest album: "Believe What We Tell You" (One Day Savior)
Web: thesleeping.com

The Sleeping mix a Sunny Day Real Estate indie vibe with a Finch screamo vibe. Song arrangements keep you guessing; sometimes it's a chorus, sometimes a verse, sometimes a bridge, sometimes a breakdown, but always in just the right order. Worth checking out.





by Rei Nishimoto

Boston Hardcore doesn't get much more legit than Blood For Blood. Dating back to their formation in 1995, the band has consistently pummeled the touring scene with their kick to the head meld of punk and hardcore. Many releases on Victory Records earned the band the respect they command, but the band has found a new home on Thorp Records for their 2004 release of "Serenity". The music belts with such a 'fuck you all' intensity, it's no wonder the band gets a good chunk of its fan mail from prisons. Braving a beat down, questions were posed to vocalist Buddha.

Blood For Blood has been going on for nine years and you've built upquite the following. What do you think it is that keeps the fans wanting more?
I think our lyrics really hit home with a lot of our fans. Musically we've been able to do what we want but still keep that Blood For Blood sound.

You released "Serenity" on Thorp Records as opposed to your past few releases on Victory. Why the label switch and what did Thorp offer that was different?
We had finished our contractual obligations with Victory. We wanted to go with a smaller label to insure that BFB would be a priority on the to do list. Thorp was there to offer what we were asking for.

A few years ago, Blood For Blood did stop for a brief period of time prior to the Sick Of It All US tour. What happened then and what made you reconsider to return to the scene?
We as a band have always had a problem communicating even to this day. We had a misunderstanding prior to "Outlaw Anthems" which caused us to not speak to each for over a year. We knew we still had to finish our Victory contract. So we decided to record "Outlaw Anthems" and then call it quits. Fortunately we getting together fixed all our stupid personal problems.

"Serenity" brings the trademark Blood For Blood sound but also mixes in more melodic parts than past material. Was this something that just happened or was this something you've been wanting to experiment with?
There are many things we'd like to incorporate into the sound of the band sooner or later. Melodic parts only came into play once we felt more comfortable with the quality our ability to do so.

Your bio mentions Johnny Cash quite a few times.
We always liked the honesty and rawness of his music.

Who were some of the other heroes the band have had over the years?
Sheer Terror, SOIA, Slayer, and the Misfits all of the greats.

Is Boston hardcore anything like the days when Blood For Blood started?
Not really. It is much harder to get a good venue for any shows. The clubs around Boston won't even let us play anymore because of our violent shows of the past.

How much has the scene grown since that time?
The metalcore has seen has grown a lot in outside suburbs of Boston.

What are your thoughts of today's modern hardcore/metalcore scene?
I don't really care for it. I'm sure the bands are all cool people but I don't give a shit how cool you look. I have no problem with it being mainstream but keep it fresh not to be a carbon copy of the every screamy metalcore band out there.

Do you ever feel like Blood For Blood has been misunderstood over the years due to its brash style and the whole white trash aspect within the band's persona? How much has changed over the years?
We've never felt that.
We have had to put dummies in check though. There are people out there that hear we are angry and cater to a more rough crowd so they assume that we are not intelligent. It seems many people have given us a chance and they liked what they heard.

What are some of the reactions you receive when people discover Blood For Blood for the first time?
The common statement from our fans is this "Your music has gotten me through some tough times, thank you." I feel avenged for all the negative press we've gotten in our home town of Boston.

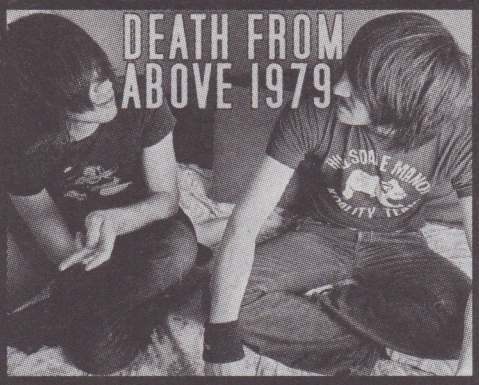
Will Blood For Blood be touring? There hasn't been much mention of the band being on tour this year.
Not this present time. We all have things in our personal lives that need to be taken care of at this time. i hope to be out by next year.

What does the future hold for the band as it nears ten years of Blood For Blood?
There are an endless amount of things we have not accomplished as band yet. We would like to get on a big Ozzfest type tour to get our music out there to people that otherwise would never had heard of us.

Final words?
Blood For Blood is still here and we are not going away anytime soon. Prepare yourself cause we're coming.

www.bloodforblood.org

2004 "Serenity" (Thorp)
2002 "Outlaw Anthems" (Victory)
2001 "Wasted Youth Brew) (Victory)
1999 "Livin in Exile) (Victory)
1998 "Revenge On Society" (Victory)

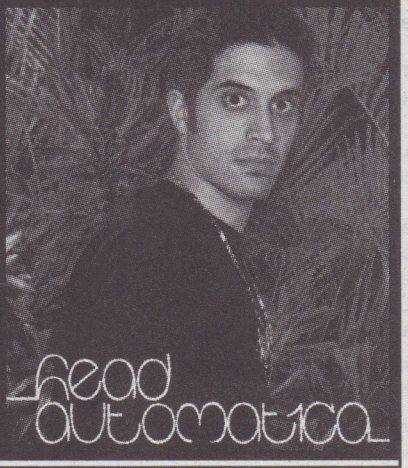


Oh: Canada!
Plays with: Panthers
New album: "You're a Woman, I'm a Machine" (Vice)
Web: deathfromabove1979.com

DFA1979 is similar to Hella, only not as focused and with a bass. And vocals, sorta. Even tho they now have a '1979' in their name, we still like 'em.

Home is: Norway
Plays with: Brutal industrial type bands. There aren't many like this.
Latest album: "Internal Punishment Program" (Candlelight)
Web: redharvest.com

Apocalyptic Industrial Paranoia Metal. It doesn't get much more industrial and metal than this while still retaining a some sense of 'song'. These guys would rape Trent Reznors ass and make Nivek Ogre watch.



From: Everywhere
Tours with: The Used, The Bled
Debut album: "Tokyo Decadence" (Warner Brothers)
Web: headautomatica.com

This is dance fucking rock, plain and simple. Vocals are delivered via Daryl Palumbo, corners rounded off by Mr. Dan the Automator. Sure, we all really miss Glassjaw, but Head Automatica is a good diversion, and fuck, at least it's not some lame shit like rap rock.

Julie Doiron

Home is: New Brunswick Canada
Tours: small coffee house collectives
Latest album: "Goodnight Nobody" (Jagjaguwar)
Web: juliedoiron.com

Erics Trip was a fucking genius band that few know about. Julie Doiron was their elf-voiced bassplayer. While her previous band was a pioneer in the the lo-fi movement, current endevors find her singing softly with a guitar. Insecure and personal songs that waft with just a hint of those boy/girl songs she used to sing with Rick. *sigh.

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10/16 Victoria, BC @ Lucky Bar
10/18 Eugene, OR @ John Henry's
10/19 San Jose, CA @ The Blank Club
10/20 Sacramento, CA @ The Boardwalk
10/21 Long Beach, CA @ Alex's Bar
10/22 Santa Barbara, CA @ Velvet Jones
CRITERION RECORDS

by James Wright

There have been few albums that have influenced the face of hard music so heavily. Slayer did it in 1983 with "Reign In Blood", then Metallica followed suit with "Kill Em' All" and finally Megadeth finished things off with their self-titled debut.

Since those early 1980's, the rumblings outside of the metal world and into the mainstream have been few. Besides nu-metal, true American heavy metal has remained in the underground. Boston based Shadows Fall is about to change that with the release of their fourth album, "The War Within". An album so devastating and loud that it will resonate through the music world like a call to arms.

This newest from Shadows Fall's draws upon the greatness of early Bay Area thrash such as Exodus and Testament, while embracing the dynamics and beauty of Metallica.

"Our biggest influence between all of us are those Bay area thrash bands. Testament, old Metallica, Exodus..." says Shadows Fall frontman Brian Fair. "That's always been a big part of our sound, even more so with the last record than this one, but we're always going to have that influence in our sound."

Even with the thrash presence on, "The War Within" this album is Shadows Fall's most melodic and dynamic yet. 'The Ghost of Past Failures' features a melancholic guitar intro that will send listeners to the edge before crushing them with a powerful hook in the chorus. 'What Drives the Weak' could easily claw its way onto radio with its huge vocal hook and harmony, while 'Inspiration On Demand' combines all of the strength of Shadows Fall into one lethal dose of musical perfection.

With expectations for "The War Within" riding high, Fair seems unfazed and confident.

"I want this record to blow the doors off of things because we're so proud of this it." Fair closes. "We think it's a great bridge between a lot of the gaps we hear in music today and I think we fill a nice void."

The climb to critical and fanatical acclaim wasn't easy for Shadows Fall. Nearly eight years ago, in 1997, they released their debut "Somber Eyes to the Sky" on their own Lifeless Records. Touring around the Boston area, Shadows Fall quickly became local favorites but things quickly fell apart internally for the band and they parted with their vocalist.

After deciding to continue with Shadows Fall, the band hired ex-Overcast vocalist Brian Fair to take the vacant frontman position and quickly signed with Century Media Records to record their sophomore effort, "Of One Blood". Perseverance paid off as Shadows Fall toured relentlessly, winning over new fans on a nightly basis. By then the band's devastating live set had started a buzz around the metal underground as they shared stages with the likes of Candiria, the Misfits, King Diamond and Glassjaw. Each tour was done with a "Do it yourself" work ethic and minimal finances.

"It was so ghetto, bro," exclaims Fair about the band's early tours. "We had a van with no trailer, equipment in the back, five guys and no crew. Usually friends booked shows for us and we stayed at their house."

After the touring had finished, the band was left near penniless and left to write the follow-up to "Of One Blood" in-between tours. The group came through with astonishing results as they released their breakthrough album, "The Art of Balance" to critical acclaim. The album was a juggernaut as it posted the highest first week sales of any Century Media artist in the label's history. The sales numbers landed Shadows Fall on the Billboard Charts, a feat no other Century Media band had accomplished and relatively unheard of for a band so heavy. Tours with Killswitch Engage, Lamb of God and Ozzfest solidified the band as one of metal's hottest bands.

Even with the success Shadows Fall has garnered, the band's frontman is still humble.

"Now that we have a luxury of a tour bus, we appreciate the old way of touring so much more. We've been doing this for so long because we loved it and grinded it out, it makes you appreciate your success that much more."

Success has also afforded the band more than just better tours and a higher level of comfort. They are now able to support themselves solely on their music. Fair was previously working at a local Ice Cream store in Boston where he was allowed to work when home and hold the job when away on tour.

"We really travel way too much for just about any boss really. Its like, 'Well I can be there for three days in August and then I can be back for a week and a half in November...' says Fair candidly. "Nobody really wants to deal with that."

Without the distractions of jobs and worrying about finances, the band has had to fight other battles, namely the party lifestyle that can trap a band very easily. Fair has battled this before.

"It's gotten worse because the bigger your band gets, the more free beer and other things start coming around," he says. "I think I've always tried to maintain that fair balance because I don't have an addictive personality and I don't ever let anything like partying ruin a show, but there is a tendency to get caught up in the party lifestyle. Seriously, when you boil things down, you don't want to let it control you or your life"

The new found time has been used to focus entirely on the new album, "The War Within" and make it all the more crushing. Previously, the band was forced to record on a tight schedule in between tours with little time for writing or development of the songs. With "The Art of Balance" becoming so successful, the band was able to devote more time to writing and developing new material.

"With this record we had a lot of time to demo each song, so when we got into the studio, all the songs were done and we all knew our parts and were ready to lay it all down, which made it a less stressful environment. Usually, we're in the studio when we have a month off in between tours going, 'Shit, we gotta finish.' This album was a much more laid back atmosphere and we had a little bit more freedom."

If there is any kind of musical justice in the world, "The War Within" will hurdle Shadows Fall into the mainstream and Fair's days of scooping ice cream and riding in cramped vans will be gone forever.

www.shadowsfall.com

2004 "The War Within" (Century Media)
2002 "The Art of Balance" (Century Media)
2000 "One Blood" (Century Media)
2000 "Somber Eyes To The Sky" (Lifeless)

It's gotten worse because the bigger your band gets, the more free beer and other things start coming around...

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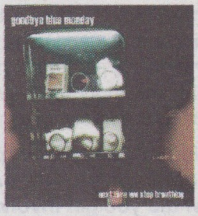

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by Matt Walker

Over the past decade Hot Water Music has set a standard for quality rock by consistently creating smart, reflective and rocking albums that never disappoint. Consisting of an amazing rhythm section (Jason Black on bass, George Rebelo on drums) coupled with the back and forth dynamic of Chuck Ragan and Chris Wollard's vocals and their complimentary guitar work, the group firmly established themselves with a distinct sound and killer live show. On their latest album, "The New What Next" Hot Water Music expands their sound into new territory, building on the style they've already perfected. Earlier this year things were looking grim as the group had to cancel several dates on the Honda Civic Tour with Dashboard Confessional because Ragan sustained a serious hand injury. As usual, Hot Water Music overcame the setback and is now gearing up for a new fall tour.

The New What Next has all the familiar elements of a Hot Water Music album, but the overall sound is somewhat of a departure from past releases.

Jason Black: One thing we had discussed when we started writing these new songs was how we really felt like we needed to break out a bit from the last two records. "Caution" and "A Flight And A Crash" are kind of interchangeable to us, so we tried to think about what we should change up to make this record stand out. We came up with some really different feels and tempos and, luckily enough for us, they worked out. We kind of feel like this is the one record of ours you need to own. The one that has all the elements of the older and newer stuff.

A lot of your songs have a very optimistic point of view regarding overcoming obstacles. What are some of the obstacles the band has had to overcome in your career?

Oh, jesus, you name it. What you've got to realize is that what the band as an entity has to overcome is the sum of what all 4 people in the band are working through at any given time. When you take personal relationships and the like into consideration, you're looking at a ton of shit to wade through. Then, you also have to overcome actual band shit, like bad shows, bad reviews, bad tours, whatever. It's really tough at times, but I like it.

Is this optimism something you consciously try to put into your music?

We just write about how we live, so it basically just happens. To us, being pessimistic really doesn't make too much sense.

How did you like playing the dates on a higher profile tour with Dashboard Confessional?

That was a great time. We're pretty much down for whatever when it comes to shows. Each different type of show and venue has it's advantages and disadvantages, which we just try to utilize or overcome and play the best show possible.

How is Chuck's hand injury? Is he in top form and ready for the upcoming tour?

I wouldn't say top form, but he seems to be ready to go. We'll know in a few days!

You are touring or recording all the time, how do you keep the momentum going? Does it ever get tiresome?

It gets very tiring, which is why we've taken all summer off. We're also planning on having a less hectic schedule around this record. Not that we won't be out on the road killing it all year, we're just going to make what we do count big time.

What do you think about the growing popularity of the indie/punk/hardcore scene and the changes it's gone through since you guys started out?

The basic good that's come of it is that more people can hear about bands like us. The basic bad that's come of it is that, like when anything becomes very popular, the shit meter quits working and we end up with every 10-cent punk band on the planet selling 4 million records. Whatever, though, it's not really something we concern ourselves with.

Hot Water Music isn't an overtly political band, but you contributed to Rock Against Bush Vol. 2. How did you get involved with that?

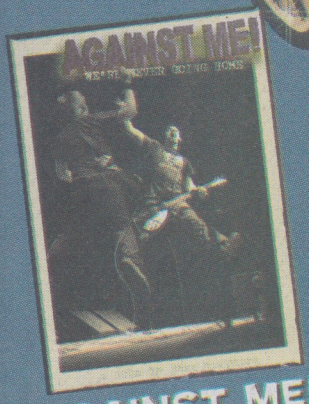
We consider being against what's happening in the world right now more common sense than politics. Our friends at Fat (Wreck Chords) told us about the comp pretty early on and it worked out with our schedule. We had a new song ready, and it's a great cause. Really, putting on song on a comp is the least we can do to help raise people's awareness.

You guys have already been a huge influence on a lot of groups, what do you want most to be remembered for?

The fact that we actually mattered for over 10 years, not 10 seconds.

www.hotwatermusic.com

WHERE IS ALL MY HO HO HOS?



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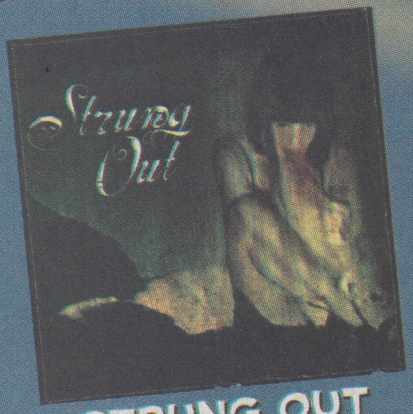

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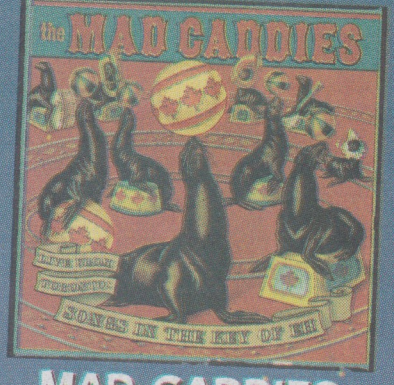

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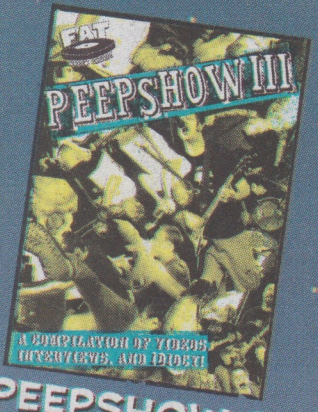

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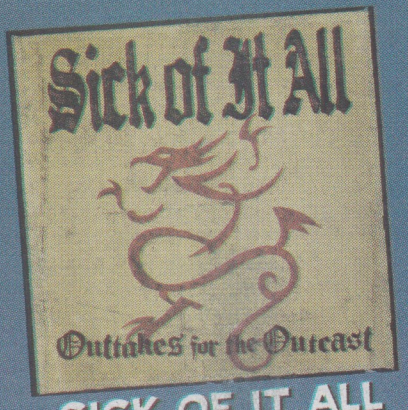

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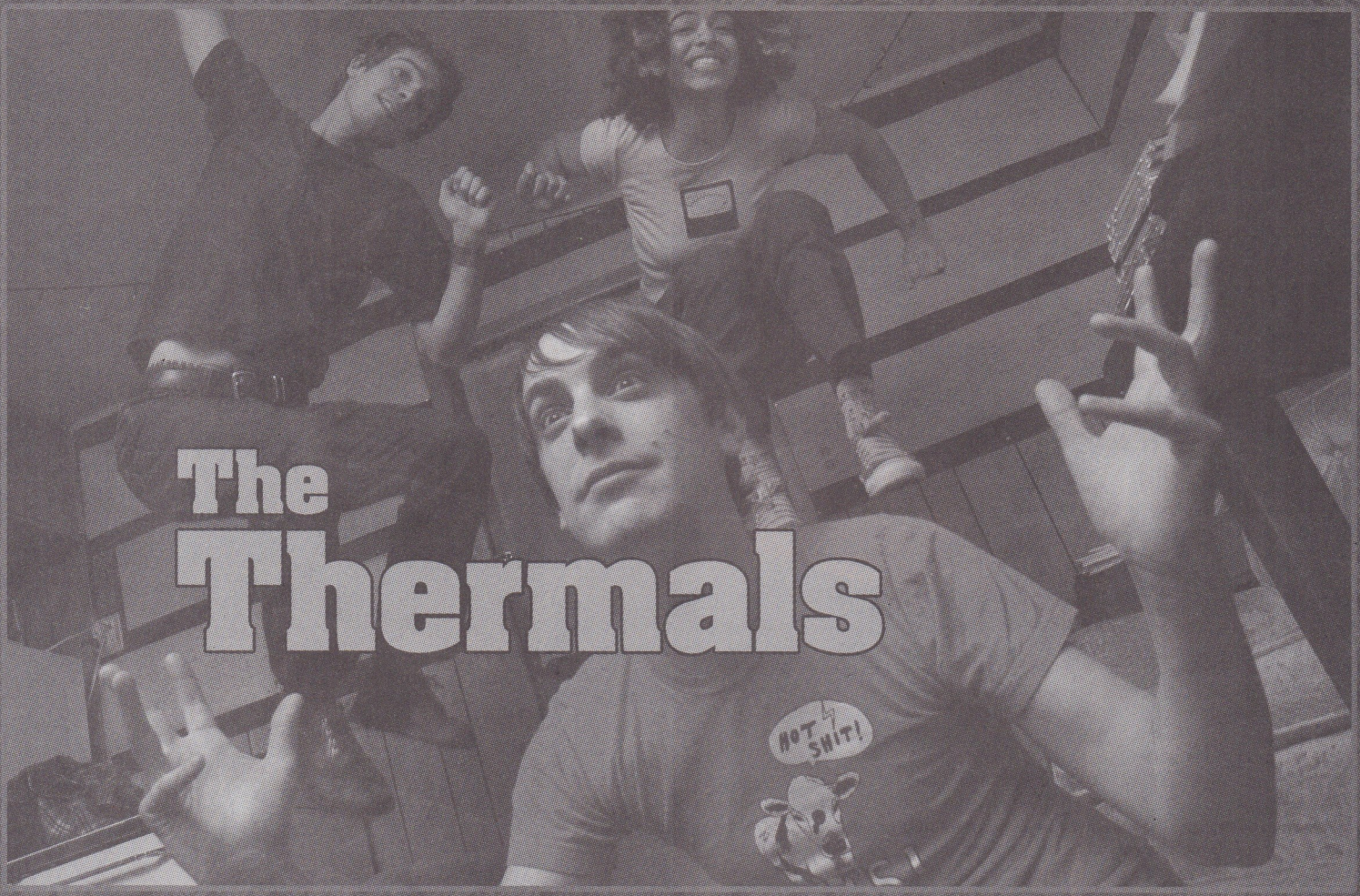
Les Toil



The Thermals

by Maxwell

When it comes to "punk" music, the name has been stripped down and reinvented so many times that it encompasses a plethora of sounds. I really wish the whole "punk is dead" thing of the 90's would have stuck because it would've saved modern rock from a lot of really bad songs, but no, the term still lingers on. The Thermals are about as close to punk as it was and how it should be as modern technology and American life will allow. Their blistering 28 minute new album "Fuckin A" is right in line with their first release "More Parts Per Million" which in itself was a bit of an anomaly as it was something critics and music enthusiasts needed as a current punk reference point. "Fuckin A" is the only way the group could do a follow-up. It's a well written punk record, dubbed "no-fi", with hooks and raw distortion. This is the most punk thing Sub-Pop has put out since the singles club ended a while back.

Words with singer Hutch Harris of The Thermals.

What exactly is it that you love about music?
I don't know that's a hard one. I don't know, you just grow up with music. It just becomes really second nature I think, how you are just always around it. Like food, I guess, I don't think about it that much because it's just a part of our life. It's just natural.

What were your previous bands before the Thermals?
Kathy and I have had a bunch of bands together. Hey La and Urban Legends and one that was just called Hutch and Kathy.

Is this the most solid band you have had?
This is the first band where everyone has a set position. One bass player, one drummer and one guitar player/singer. A lot of the other bands were interchangeable. It would always be Kathy and I and then we would always grab people to go on tour. We never had a steady line-up.

How much did "More Part Per Million" (their first "no-fi" juggernaut) really cost and where was it made?
It was really made in my house, which is called the Moss Motel, because it's Portland and moss grows everywhere. My house is sinking into the mud and the roof is sinking into the house. There is so much moss covering the roof that bushes and plants are growing out of the roof. It got passed around that it was recorded for sixty dollars. But it was really recorded for like ten dollars because I recorded it myself and there wasn't a producer or anything. I recorded it on cassette.

Four-track?
Right, so you can put a couple songs on a cassette and those are a dollar each. I used about ten of them and then there were other costs for mixing and mastering, but the actual recording costs were around ten dollars.

How was working with Chris Walla on "Fuckin A"?
That was awesome, he was great. He was so adamant about recording the record. We toured with Death Cab For Cutie and when he mixed the first album, he was all 'I'm doing your next record, I'm doing your next record'. Whenever I would see him he would say 'when are we going to record'. It was like fuck, you want someone to be that way. We don't want to go into the studio and have some asshole producer be like, here's another fucking band.

What is wrong with American crowds, why don't they dance to any music?
It's not that people are uptight, people are just shy and scared, less than uptight.

Do you think their self-image is fucked up?
Some people [feel] it's about staying cool, but it's really that they are inhibited. Obviously the drunker the crowds get, the more they dance. People just get really hammered and it shows. I had a show in Cleveland recently and it was one of my best shows ever. Everyone just got really drunk and they were just dancing and running around and just going crazy, it was awesome.

We're probably either mid-fi or some-fi. I think some-fi is pretty good.

How would you say the Thermals express themselves differently than their counterparts?
I think that we don't take ourselves seriously and that's the main thing. We just really have fun with it. We're not too cool for anything. We don't have a look or fucking dress-up or anything. It's really not about being cool at all, it's just about rocking out and having a good time.

So are you taking credit for the self-inflicted term 'no-fi'?
Totally, still taking credit for it (laughing) even if someone-else tries to.

Some day when that's a huge term they're going to be like 'It was Hutch from The Thermals who came up with that.'
It would be funny if they did. We figured we took a little jump with Chris Walla, so we're probably either mid-fi or some-fi. I think some-fi is pretty good.

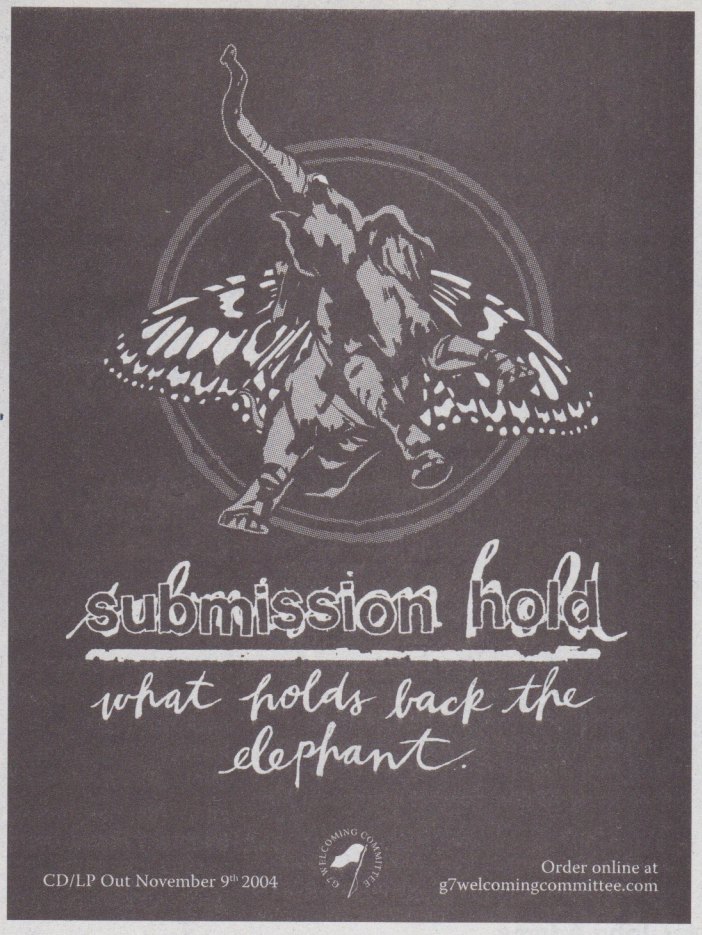
Can "Fuckin A" be a legitmate part of the language?
Yeah totally, it has to be some kind of strong emotion good or bad. You could stub your toe and be like 'Fuckin A!' or you go to a fucking party and there's fucking 100 beers lined up and be like 'Fuckin A, that's a lot of beer'. The emotions have to be strong, you can't just say "Fuckin A" for something normal or boring. You say it when you're moved in some way.

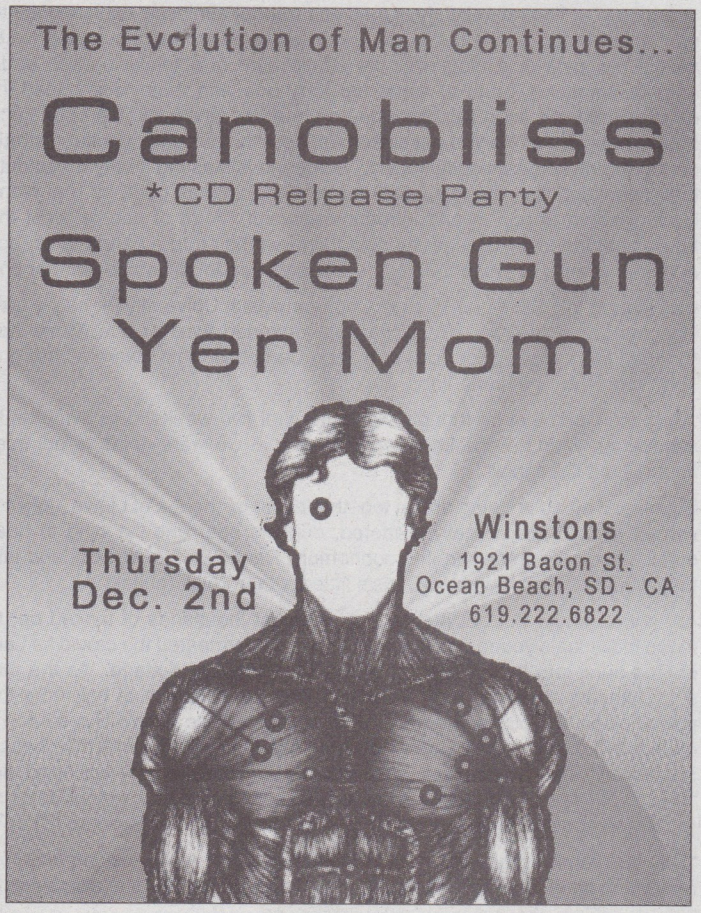
Why isn't "Fuckin A" in the dictionary?
The dictionary's got to catch up... I don't know? In high school we had this huge dictionary in the library and we'd always go look at the swear words because it had so many definitions. Like for shit they had like seven phrases. They had 'Up shit creek without a paddle' in the fucking school dictionary and we couldn't believe it. No "Fuckin A" though.

I even went online and tried to find it in Webster's and other things and that shit is not even there dude. Tell me a little bit about your partying history. I know you guys are very adamant about the fact that you smoke a lot of weed. How much weed do you think you smoke a day?
Um, too much. Yeah, we try to talk about it too much, I think, but uh we don't party that hard though, we're stoners.

www.thethermals.com

2004 "Fuckin A" (SubPop)
2003 "More Parts Per Million" (SubPop)
2003 "Culture Icons" EP (SubPop)





by John Adams

It's your freshman year of college, your books are bought, your posters are up, classes for the day are done, and your left with nothing to do but explore the dorm that you'll be calling home for the next several months. Most of the doors on your floor are slightly ajar as you wander aimlessly exploring the terrain. In one room you observe some kids gathered around a computer, in the next a few girls gossiping over the subtle hum of a television set, and in another someone listing to some top forty pop with their nose buried in a novel. Suddenly off in the distance you hear the unmistakable pounding of double bass drum. As you get closer you hear the buzzing of guitar distortion on top of drill sergeant style vocals. Someone is blasting heavy metal out of their speakers, and being a fellow metalhead that's as good as a personalized invitation to pop in and introduce yourself. A lot of people meet their future best friends in college and several meet their future band mates, however in a scenario similar to this one, bass player John Campbell meet both.

It all started in 1990 at the Virginia Commonwealth University for heavy metal kingpins Lamb of God. By some heavy-handed twist of fate, Chris Adler (drums), Mark Morton (guitars) and John Campbell (bass) were all assigned dorm rooms on the same floor.

"Mark did claim that he thought within the first two weeks of us living on the same floor when no one knew each other that we were going to get into a fight," joked Campbell.

However instead of being drawn together by an exchange of blows, they converged to enjoy what really mattered, drinking beer and listening to heavy metal. Soon the three ran into sophomore Randy Blythe (vocals) and later, they would all come to know Chris's little brother Willie (guitars).

As I stood under the hot August sun amongst thousands of tanked up, tattooed individuals young and old, a certain aura permeated the crowd as Lamb of God burst into their first song on the Ozzfest second stage. As the three string players sheltered their faces in a frenzied whiplash of hair from their power stances, vocalist Randy Blythe addressed the crowd like some half mutant evil dictator. As I eagerly awaited my conversation with their bassist, I could only utter a simplistic observation to a friend on my left hand side, "This is pure fucking metal". The comfort, confidence and airtight delivery I witnessed could only be explained by such a rich and deep-rooted history.

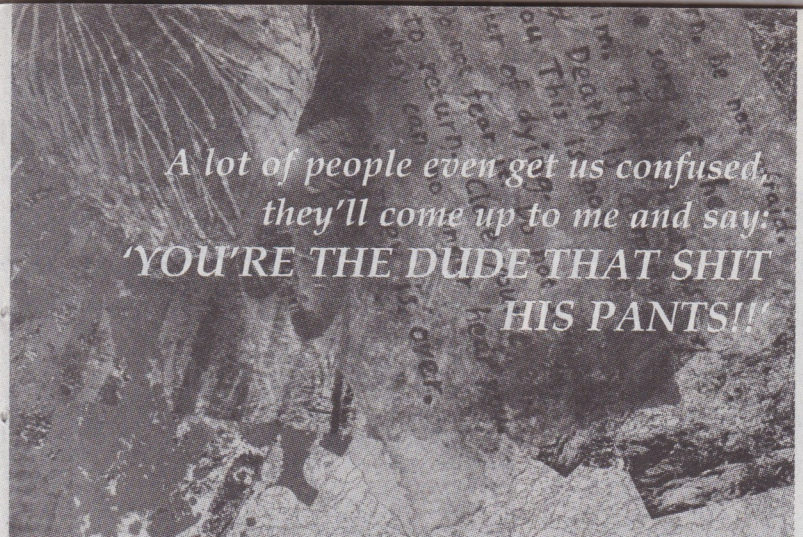
"This is a family affair, we've all known each other really fucking well for a really long time", explains Campbell. "We've all grown up quite a bit since the time we were 18 years old together and Willie and Chris have been brothers since well . . . Willie was born. We have a real tight unit and we couldn't do it without anyone of us."

From backyard BeerBQ's to co-headlining the second stage of the most high profile metal festival of all time, this Virginia based 5-piece has come a long way. As I sat inside an air-conditioned tour bus, I had to inquire about the traveling accommodations that John and his comrades had recently graduated from.

"Back in the van days, showers were few and far between", confessed Campbell. "I used to get gorilla foot . . . that's when my feet would get so disgusting and rank I wouldn't be able to take off my shoes . . . but that's all under control now".

Assembling in 1994 the band played several parties and small shows in the Virginia metal scene before signing with Prosthetic Records and releasing their first full length entitled "New American Gospel" in 2000. A few years of relentless touring in support of this release built the band a modest following and made its opening track, "Black Label" an underground metal anthem. This paved the way for their highly anticipated follow-up "As the Palaces Burn" (2003), which was well received by press and heavy music fans alike. It also landed the group a co-headlining spot on the very first Headbanger's Ball tour which thrust them into the forefront of the new wave of American metalcore. With the return of Headbanger's Ball, and Ozzy Osbourne being a TV dad, Epic records felt it was time to get in on the ground floor for this latest resurgence of metal. So they approached what they considered a band at the top of their game and struck a deal.

The first thing Epic did was help the band release a DVD called, "Terror and Hubris" which contains live performances, interview footage, videos, behind the scenes extras and the band's sense of humor most notably documented in the now infamous segment entitled: "The Blair Shit Project". In it, Randy searches through the woods behind the Birch Hill Nite club in Old Bridge, NJ for a pair of pants that Willie had shit himself in and discarded after a night of hard drinking and mayhem. Sure enough after sifting through piles of dead leaves, Randy uncovers Willie's "poopy pants" some 2 years after the life-altering event.



A lot of people even get us confused, they'll come up to me and say: 'YOU'RE THE DUDE THAT SHIT HIS PANTS!!'

"God bless Willie for letting us put that in the DVD. He gets called out about that constantly." says Campbell with a wide grin. "A lot of people even get us confused, they'll come up to me and say: 'YOU'RE THE DUDE THAT SHIT HIS PANTS!!' "That's a pretty bold thing to accuse somebody of doing. You'd better at least be sure you've got the right guy."

The DVD was a very entertaining look at the band and a comprehensive compilation of their work, but Epic wanted a new record.

"The only bad thing about being on a major is that they expect you to get in there and just get shit done right now." remarked Campbell. "Your family's at home saying where the fuck are you? But that being said, what more could you fucking ask for?"

Almost immediately upon returning from the road the band began writing and rehearsing 9 to 5 every day for a few months constructing their next release. Then they hit the studio for seven straight weeks recording the drum tracks at Water Music in Hoboken, NJ and the rest of the album at The Sound of Music in Richmond, VA.

Overseeing the entire project was seasoned producer Machine (King Crimson, Clutch).

"The week of pre-production we spent with that guy was awesome", admitted Campbell. "We let him come in and bring up ideas with what we had been creating. A lot of it was him making us go through the motions, not him just saying do this or do that. It was a great opportunity for us to develop as a band."

Whatever it was it worked, as the new album not only finds the band hammering out their signature thrash metal with heightened precision, but dipping their toes into various other murky waters. As if that wasn't enough, the band enlisted the skills of some seasoned veterans. Both Alex Skolnick of Testament fame and Chris Poland (making his second consecutive guest appearance) of Megadeth lay down some signature shredding on the album's title track "Ashes of the Wake".

With "Ashes of the Wake", which hit stores August 31st, Campbell and company are attempting to keep the Lamb of God juggernaut moving forward with their most versatile and focused recording to date. Whether the mainstream is prepared for such an onslaught is yet to be seen, but regardless of the outcome, this well isn't about to dry up anytime soon.

"We never started this thing to get famous or sell tons of records," said Campbell, "lots of dudes will move out to LA to start a band and that's cool, but we just wanna make music that kicks your ass".

Lamb of God will continue to hit the road and support "Ashes of the Wake". They're currently on tour with Fear Factory, Children of Bodom and Throwdown until late November.

www.LambofGod.tv

2004 "Ashes Of The Wake" (Sony)
2003 "As The Palaces Burn" (Prosthetic)
2000 "New American Gospel" (Metal Blade)

Nov. 26 THE DICKIES
TEN FOOT POLE

Nov. 27 TSOL
Narcoleptic Youth

Dec. 3 THE EXPLOITED
TOTAL CHAOS X RESILIANCE

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YESTERDAYS RISING

by Catheryn "Cat" Dumas

Poetic screaming. An oxymoron only if you have not yet been touched by the firestorm that is Yesterdays Rising. This is a group of teenaged males who are on the fast track to something great, who can artfully play grinding and sometimes eerie music in time with deep meaninful lyrics. Their style can be compared to The Used and My Chemical Romance.

My first experience of these guys was at a live free show sponsored by Exodus clothing in Murrieta, CA. Knowing the history of that area I figured the show, which was in the warehouse parking lot, would be shut down by 9p.m. I was amazed when Yesterdays Rising, the headling band, got to play their entire set with such a huge amount (a couple hundred) of teenagers congregated there.

Frontman Brandon Bolmer possesses strong vocal chords which can alternate seamlessly between melody and screaming angst. There are two guitar players, Jon Bloom and Justin Panno. Drums are played by Jamie Ethridge and Richie Ochoa plays bass.

Richie and Jon are the founding members of the band and sought out Brandon at a show at SOMA in San Diego. "They just somehow asked me to try out for the band", says Brandon who happened to live in Murrieta, CA where Jon and Richie lived. And so they went on to quickly build a fan base and burn through college radio stations. They have had airtime on popular Southern California stations such as 91X, X103.9, and KROQ. The bands favorite venue, Soma, has helped to build the base fast. "We really like the kids down in San Diego because they are so into music and dedicated to their favorites", said Richie.

With an amazing ability to capture an audience, Yesterday's Rising is the youngest band to travel with the Van's Warped Tour. In fact, as personally pointed out to them by Warped Tour founder Kevin Lyman, these guys were six years old when the first tour was put on.

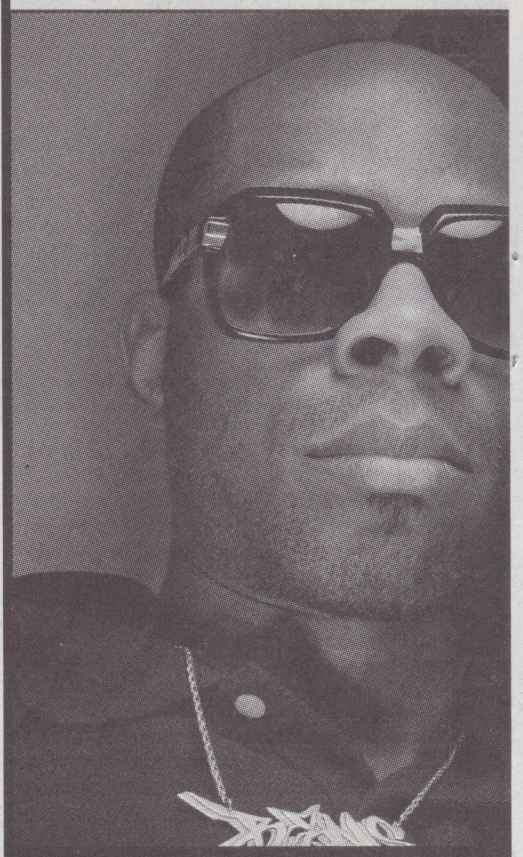
Due to a scheduling mixup they didn't get to play Montana but their favorite spot was Vancouver, Canada because of it's party atmosphere and happy people. Unfortunaley, while there, the band's van was broken into and many personal items were stolen. Sadly, among the stolen items were assistant manager Chad's Indie CD collection that he had been growing since grade school.

A great show of their future, besides the fact that they are invited back for next years tour, is that they are a relatively new band that has been together for a collective year-and-a-half but actually all the current members have been together for eight-and-a-half months. If you do the math that means they went on the tour together after being a band for only about six months but they were able to hold their own, according to manager, Brian, as if they were doing it for years. Also, they mastered the challenge of the gruelling tour schedule of drive, play, drive, and stand in line for showers when available. Not a picnic at all (45 shows in 50 days) but these guys wouldn't give it up for anything.

Currently, they are working on their first full-length CD (their third album already) with Don Lithgow of DML studios. Lithgow also produced their last EP "When We Speak, We Breathe". The new album, on Fearless Records, is due out November 23.

www.yesterdaysrising.com

2004 "When We Speak We Breathe" (Fearless)



by PR!

Part poet, part MC and always dressed to the tips, Beans is most recognizable by his throat and then his rhymes. Originally a member of the now-disbanded hip hop collective Antipop Consortium, Beans continues to impress both on and off stage. He keeps afloat on his own beats that ride the line between experimental and psychoactive. Wrap combinations of both 80's breaker soundtracks and progressive hip hop with his unique wordplay, and you've got quite an experience.

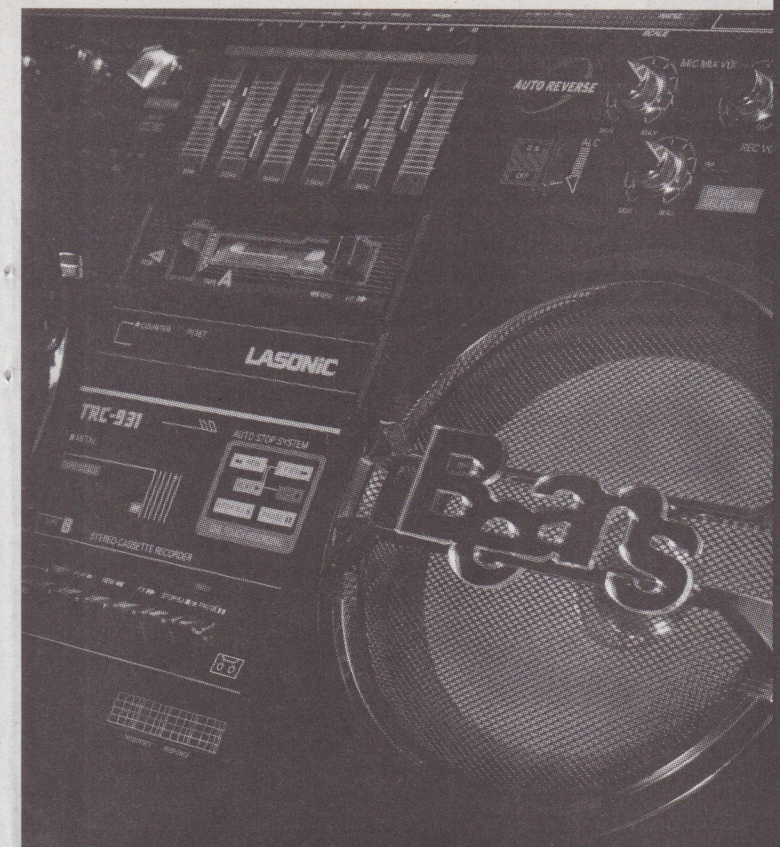
A few moments with Beans.

Where did you grow up?
Whiteplains. [New York]

How did you do in school?
I didn't like school.

Ah. Any particular reason or story?
I didn't want to be there. I was distraught a lot. I went to a public school and then switched to private school in 9th grade, with only 50 kids. There was only three black kids. I got into a lot of art and reading and things like that. Then the school shut down while I was in 12th grade, and since I switched during the beginning, I had to start back in 11th, so I had to repeat the 11th and 12th grade.

No shit! No wonder you didn't want to be there!
Well, I almost didn't graduate because I didn't like playing gym. I didn't want to get sweaty all day and change my clothes. What happened was the teacher got sick, but the substitute was into music, so I just spoke to him about music and he passed me. The teacher got back the last two weeks of school, so I played and I passed.



Was there a person has a teacher or someone that made a memorable impression to you when you were younger?
No, there are multiple people, not just one specific person. Well, maybe this kid Al who told me that I should stop being a DJ and would be a better MC. [pauses] If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be rhyming.

What was the first music you got into?
Kiss, Dolly Parton, the Grease soundtrack.

At what point did you think you could create music?
High school. I wanted to be a DJ but couldn't afford the equipment. That's when Al told me I should start rhyming.

Why did you want become a DJ? Because you thought you knew a lot about music, or you wanted to be a DJ?
Because I wanted to DJ for this rap group.

Did that rap group go anywhere?
Nope.

So Beans first became something you had working on the side yeah?
I was always working on Beans. What happened was, Warp signed me for a solo deal.

Just you doing the album?
Yeah. I work with an engineer named Chiki, he also played bass. I brought in a cello player and things like that.

What kind of equipment do you use?
I use a drum machine... I don't want to be specific.

What do you think about computers and artists? It seems like a lot of kids out there have a computer, they download a program, use a few templates and samples, burn the CD and call themselves musicians.
It's a lot easier to try and attempt to make music, but that doesn't make them good at what they're doing.

How do you know when a song is done?
Um (long pause) when it feels finished. Some take a little longer. The ones that take the longest are the ones I memorize first.

2004 "Shock City Maverick" (Warp)
2004 "Now Soon Someday" (Warp)
2003 "Tomorrow Right Now" (Warp)

by Eric Huntington

The creator of the smash hit Adult Swim cartoon The Venture Brothers refers to himself in the credits as Jackson Publick, not Christopher McCulloch, his real name and the name that's under the writing credits of both The Tick (animation) and The Tick (live action). Why? I'm not really sure.... I guess I could have asked him, but honestly, Jackson is a pretty slick name.

the VENTURE BROS.

First off, the Venture Brothers is an excellent show, best thing on Adult Swim since Harvey Birdman. How did the concept of Venture brothers come together?

Slowly. It started with the boys out of nowhere... I had been exposed early in life to those old Tom Swift books, and that just made me want to goof on those '60s adventure boys. The first time I drew Hank and Dean was probably around, oh, 1996. I started drawing the boys and not having much to do with them, aside from making them say "Golly!" and things like that. I was using them with a Johnny Quest theme in mind. It kinda came together because my friends, people in the animation business I knew [Pat Giles, Miguel Martinez-Joffre, Prentis Rollins, and Michael Foran] and I started a small publishing company to publish this comic book anthology called Monkeysuit (www.monkeysuit.com "Rex Steele: Nazi Smasher" looks fucking great, comics as well, etc.) so I needed a story for that in a, sort of, [Johnny] Quest type world. It's been a while since I drew in comics, and I knew what style I wanted to do, so I held off and drew something simpler that had nothing to do with the Venture Brothers, which gave me another year. One night, I was just bored enough to type all my notes in a screenwriting program. When I was finished, I had nine pages, which got me all excited. So I finished the first draft in four nights. I had kind of an inner-crisis before that and had just come out of it, so I was all cocky and invigorated and wrote the comic for me. And then I go, "Since you wrote it for you, maybe it's also for Comedy Central." So I pitched it to them. And they said no.

So they passed on it completely?

Yeah. They passed on it in late 1999, and then I got hired to write the Tick (live action) show in Los Angeles. And that kept me busy...

...for a couple of months? (The show was cancelled after a season).

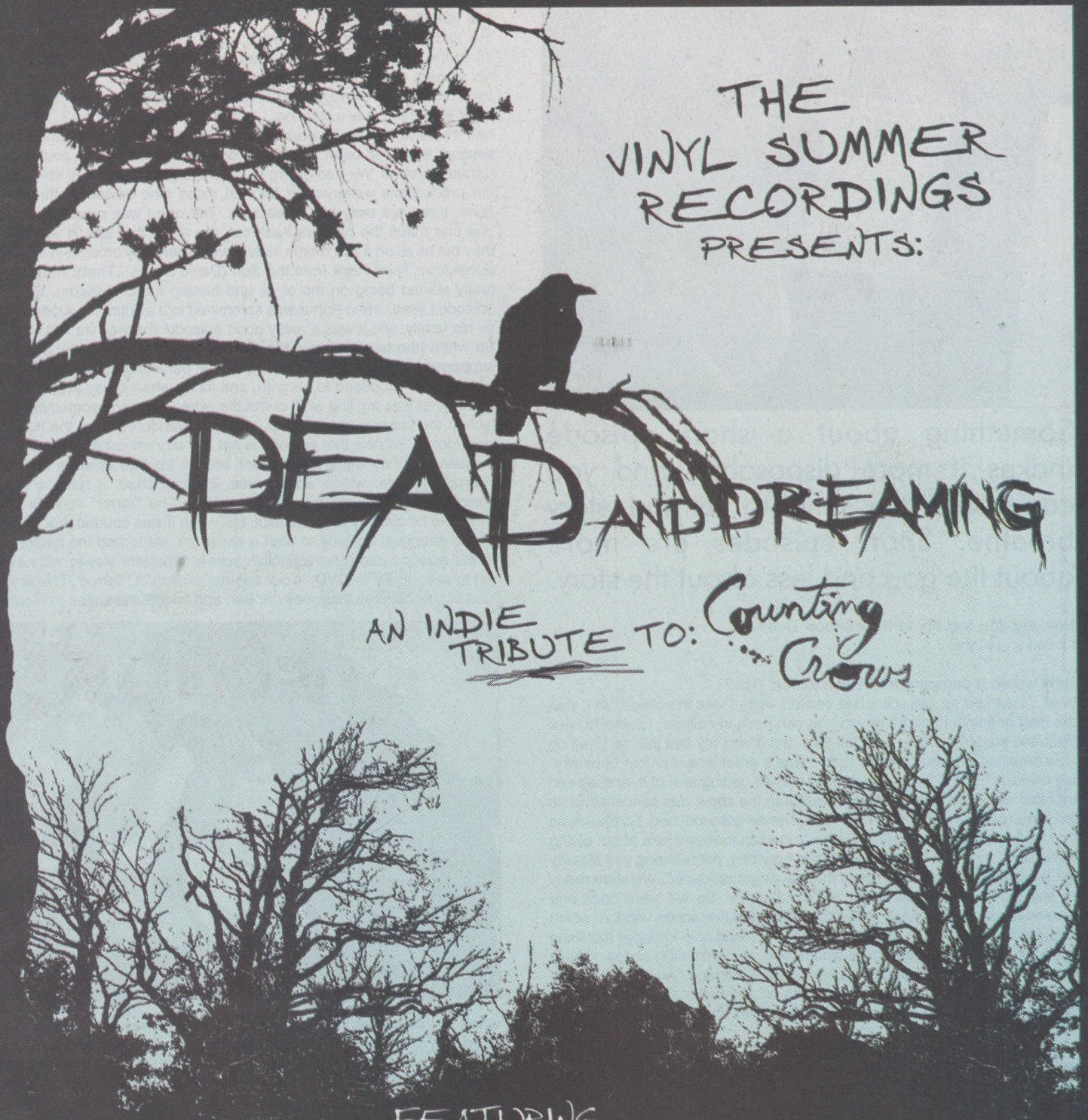
(laughs) Yeah. Actually, kept me busy for quite a while. It took a long time to make a failed show. There were some other people interested [in Venture Brothers] at the time... someone actually wanted to make it a CG show (computer graphics - a cartoon rendered and created on a computer).

Do you like CG shows?

The ones that exist now? No. At the time, I really saw this as a derivative of the '60s cartoon show, so the really horrible 60's Spiderman slide show animation would make this funnier, but i was also aware that this joke had been made already. Someone showed me some CG animation and I thought, wow, this is a good way to pull it out of it's 60s retro ironic atmosphere and able to make something beautiful and then obnoxious, that was more attractive to me. But that deal fell through, so I looked at the pilot script again, and the materials about the show I had been sending out and I realized I'd hastily slapped it together after a week of writing the pilot. So, I spent a month drawing a fairly elaborate pitch package, and I also had to change a few things. For example, 9/11 had just happened, and my villain was an arab, so i had to change that. Changed it, had another meeting with Comedy Central who had obviously NOT forgotten they had already rejected it before. Then I sent it to Cartoon Network and they called me back in about a week, wanting to make a pilot

You worked on live action The Tick, correct? Didn't you also work with the animation version?

Yeah. There was a substantial gap in time between the two... I wrote for the animation Tick from 1994 to 1997.



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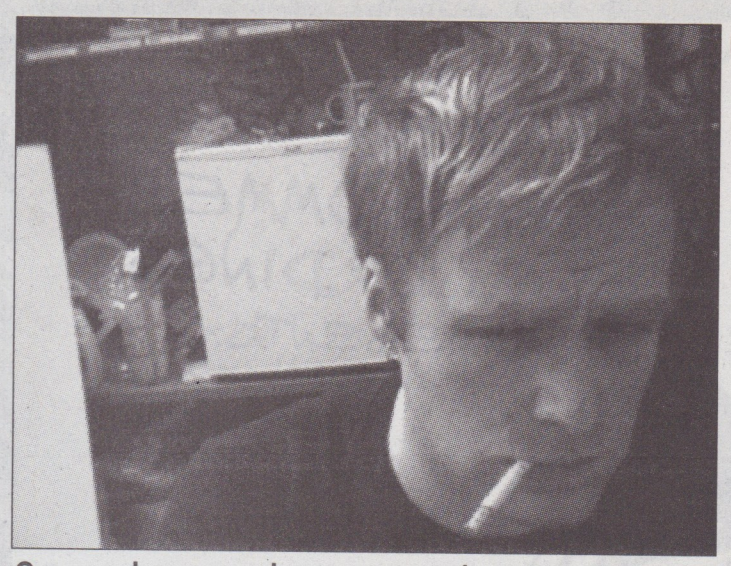


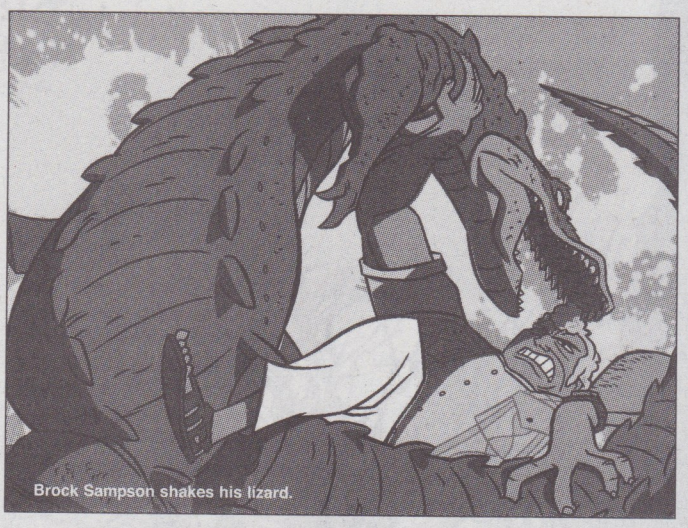
Something about a short episode makes it more disposable, and you can't take the time to let the story breathe. Short episodes are more about the gag and less about the story.

How did you feel about the cartoon Tick?
I loved it. (laughs)

How would it compare to the live action Tick?
Well... I worked on the animation version while I was in college, so it was the best imaginable part time job you can have in college. I came to New York and started working on it full time, but it was my first job, so I had no idea no other job would be like that. It was a great time, the four of us writing the stuff. By the fourth season, we started getting sick of it, and agreed that this would be the last season. But then the show was cancelled while we were writing the fourth season, and it never got produced. So there was that feeling of being unfulfilled. Some comedian makes a joke about eating a bag of cookies and reaching into the empty bag, not realizing you already ate the last cookie. We had ideas that never got produced. We were ready to say goodbye, we just didn't get the chance. So we went back and worked a development with these people for the live action version, which was exciting. Live action, working in Hollywood and able to revive this thing you love. And it was the original writers from the animation series. I really went out there [to Hollywood] to kick ass. At the time, I had a real creative renaissance, so I wanted to work my ass off and make an amazing show. In the end, it was the hardest job I've ever had and unfulfilling in a lot of ways.

Which brings me to my followup question: What happened?
Well, networks get scared of new things. Guys who have never done a live action TV show didn't know how to do it at first. I don't think Ben [Edlund, creator] realized how much power he had over the show, and, well, he's not the most aggressive person. Also, he was swimming in this pool with millionaire producers. He's got a production company giving him notes. He's got the network giving him notes. The production company second guesses with the network thinks... so you change it and the network wants you to change it back. All these idiots who are trying to substantiate your job, giving you all these notes, and they're all wrong. When we shot the pilot, Fox had the attitude that this is strange, different and weird, so we're just going to let you do what you do. They suggested that because it wasn't a sitcom and because it was a shot in the dark, it's either going to be a hit or a flop, and we can't tamper with it because it doesn't adhere to the rules they're used to dealing with. Once we shot our second episode, they decided it was time to tamper. Our first episode was a bit of a failure. It was cast weird and directed worse. Just from that, we learned we had to change our approach. This isn't a cartoon, we didn't get the spider tank... we've got to write around that stuff.

Did you like the pilot?
Yes and no. What we can do in live action... I don't know if I would have taken the same approach to it. [Barry] Sonnenfeld's a good director but his camera tells you everything is tongue and cheek. He directs cartoonishly in a lot of ways, and I thought the joke of the Tick was playing it straight. It was a little too... 'winking' at you, you know? [the pilot] had it's flaws. We really learned how to do the show by the end of the season. If we had been given a second season, I think we could have turned it around. We had grown to know the actors and their strengths, the productions weaknesses, etc. Of those nine episodes, three are good, three are okay and three suck. The one I was proudest of, the one that made the network freak out, the show that after it was shot, they put us all on a two month hiatus, was when they brought in the producer from Third Rock from the Sun (David Sacks). That's when they really started being on top of us and turning it into a sitcom. But the episode I liked, when Arthur was committed to a asylum for superhero's by his family, and it was a really good episode, the way we first shot it. So when [the network] saw the the daily, they were like, "And this is supposed to be a comedy?" because that particular episode was grim when it was supposed to be grim, and funny when it was supposed to be. So that was my first whiff of trouble, when we made something that looked the way we wanted it to, and they wondered what the hell we were doing. So now that episode is not the way we cut it. At the end of the season, they made us reshoot scenes for that episode and the "Terror" episode, which were worse. In once case, it ruins a good episode and in the other, it made it dorkier. The "Terror" episode was written to be the day after the pilot, but when it was courted that it wasn't the strongest episode to start a series on, we turned the beginning of the episode into a retrospective scene. What the viewer will never get to see, on TV or DVD, is our original version of "Terror". This is the kind of political crap that goes on. Ben and I wrote the scene in "Terror"



Brock Sampson shakes his lizard.

where Arthur comes in with a leg in a cast, and was basically thinking of quitting after a year of hanging with The Tick, and so they discuss the first night. The producer/writer/jackass changed all that, rewrote it and made it into a little party that Batmanuel and Captain Liberty were throwing for Tick and Arthur in honor of them being together for a year, which was totally out of character for them and, well, smiley gay. A guy who has been hurt and was thinking of quitting is a bit darker and more honest... so everyone hated the rewrite and it got switched back to our original version. So, when we weren't on set the day they were shooting the version we wrote, the producer came down and said "This isn't working" and handed out to everyone his old pages, and they filmed the gay party thing without telling anyone, like Ben, the CREATOR of the show. And that's the crap you have to deal with.

Is that typical of 'the business'?
I dunno, I'm not in the business either! Although, everyone that worked on it expressed that this was the most horrifying work experience ever. When we started, I heard shit like, "Oh, on Mad About You everyone hated each other" but by the end of The Tick, it was clear that this was the worst.

How has the reaction to Venture Brothers been so far?
99.5% excellent. All the reviews I've read have been good with the exception of Maxim, which pretty much blew off all of Adult Swim as 'pothead humor' so... (laughs). But even then, they gave it 2-3 stars. I read the message boards online. It's funny to read them, and you go into it thinking that they will be informative but they're usually not. What's interesting is that most people are initially resistant to new things, and they also like to bitch about lineup time changes. I saw a lot of postings on how people didn't like it at first, but it's growing on them now, from average viewer to fiercely loyal.

A lot of the lineup on Adult Swim is in the form of 12-15 minute shows... was there any desire to do that?
I just did that because that's how I wrote the pilot, and that's what I was used to. When I pitched it to adult swim, I didn't even know they had those. All I knew was that they had adult animation. There was a moment when we were closing the deal that Mike Lazzo expressed uncertainty if it was a half hour show or not, but it was too late since the contract had been signed (laughs). It wouldn't have been as good with a shorter show. Something about a short episode makes it more disposable, and you can't take the time to let the story breathe. Short episodes are more about the gag and less about the story.

The guys running Family Guy are pretty open on how much censorship they receive, yet you seem to push the boundaries as well. How much is censored before airing?
Only on the pilot, and I have Family Guy to thank for that. When we ran the pilot, that's when Family Guy reruns started airing, and that built up the resistance a lot. They were starting to censor stuff that airs at 11pm on a cable channel that had aired on a network at 9pm without being censored. So Mike [Lazzo] said that was crazy, and they loosened their standards a lot. On the pilot, I did have to cut some stuff, but by the time they made the series, the only thing we had to clear was Molotov Cocktease. Oh and actually, with the episode that just aired, when the footage came back from Korea, we had to put black censor bars over the skimpy outfits of the strippers, even tho they weren't actually nude, which really put a new spin on the joke.

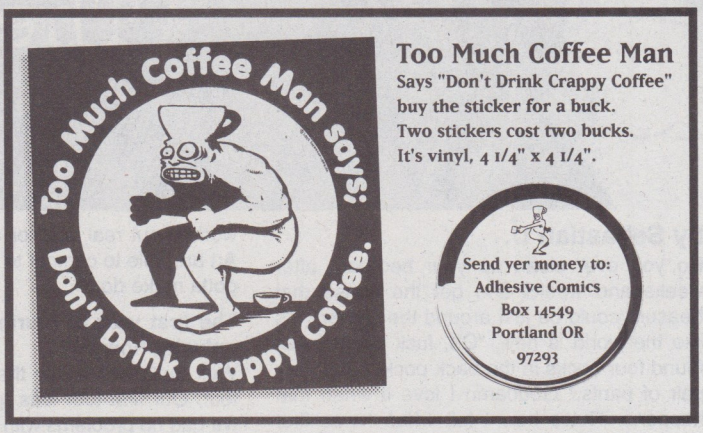
Is there ever an explanation of the baby-in-the-womb dreams Dr. Venture has?
Eventually. (laughs)

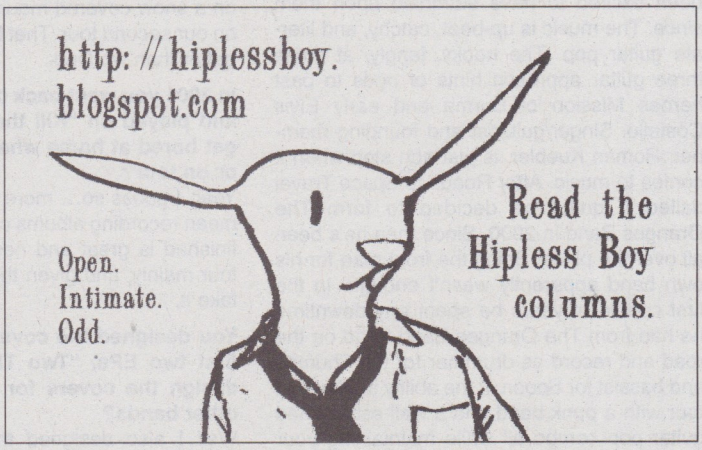
DVD planned?
I assume so. Supposedly, they mentioned it on their schedule next year. One of the bumpers they showed a few weeks back was a list of the DVDs planned for next year, and Venture Brothers was on for a fall release. Wether that's true or not, I don't know. They make ambitious plans, but they also bullshit people a lot. I assume it will happen at one point.

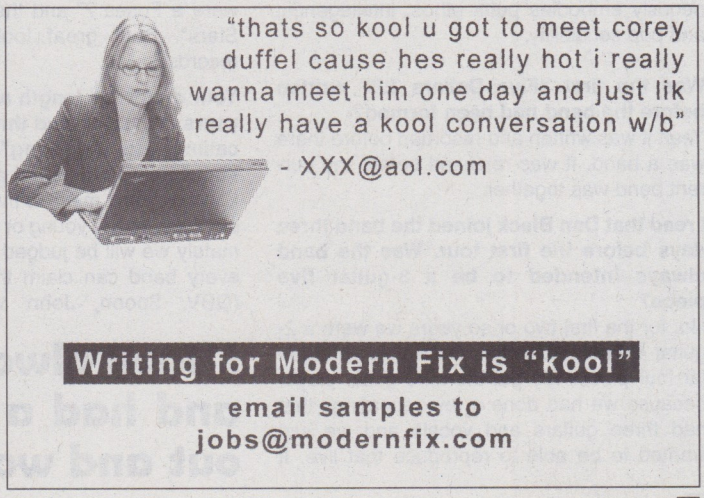
Anything else you are working on?
(laughs) Not really, no. I have some other ideas i want to kick around... two screenplays I've been dying to write, but I came up with both ideas with Ben, so I have to wait until he is free. And one of them requires a huge amount of research, because it's a period thing. I'll probably have to find some work soon.

Are you Dean or Hank?
Hank, but probably more Monarch or Dr. Venture.

www.adultswim.com







The Oranges Band

by Sebastian U.

Do you ever clean up your bedroom after weeks and weeks and get the sense that treasure could be just around the corner? It's like the world is new. "Oh, fuck yeah! I just found four bucks in the back pocket of a dirty pair of pants." Goddamn I love it when that happens. That's how I felt when I was first introduced to The Oranges Band, and I have been excited to have stumbled upon them since. The music is up-beat, catchy, and literate guitar pop. The hooky, jangly, at times three guitar approach hints of nods to past heroes Mission of Burma and early Elvis Costello. Singer/guitarist and founding member, Roman Kuebler, is just non stop when it comes to music. After Roads to Space Travel called it quits, he decided to form The Oranges Band in 2000. Since then he's been all over the place. Being the front man for his own band apparently wasn't enough. In the first couple of years he spent any downtime he had from The Oranges Band to go on the road and record as drummer for the Thumbs and bassist for Spoon. If the ability to play and tour with a punk band and a well established guitar pop combo all while maintaining your own band is any indication, Kuebler simultaneously embodies punk ethos, intellegence, and pop sensibility.

Was the first "Five Dollars EP" written before the band had been formed?
Yeah it was written and recorded before there was a band. It was released before the current band was together.

I read that Dan Black joined the band three days before the first tour. Was the band always intended to be a 3-guitar five piece?
No, for the first two or so years we were a 2-guitar 4 piece. Actually, we are again a 2-guitar four piece. We got the third guitar player because we had done a few recordings that had three guitars and vocals and we just wanted to be able to reproduce that live. It worked out real well for awhile, but neither Virat nor Art are able to commit to the band full time so we just gotta make do.

The first year of touring had been described as unlucky, how so?
Well, not necessarily the first year, just the second tour. Our first tour was quite lucky in the sense that we had no problems with transportation or equipment or cancelled shows or broken bones or getting stuck on a snow covered mountain... all of which did occur on our second tour. That being said though, it was still better than working.

In 2001 you went back out on the road with Spoon and played on "Kill the Moonlight". Do you just get bored at home when you're not in the studio or on tour?
Yeah I guess so... more so when I am not on tour. I mean recording albums can be cool, and having them finished is great and necessary. However, I play to tour mainly, and given the opportunity I will probably take it.

You designed the cover for the re-release of the first two EPs, "Two Thousands". Did you also design the covers for the other albums, or for other bands?
Well I also designed the $5 EP, "On TV" & "All Around". The only other albums I have worked on were a Fuses 7" and the Slow Jets "Good Morning Stars". Both great looking but better sounding records.

Your debut full length album came out after three years of touring and three EPs, and some are still calling you a "young" band. How do you feel about being classified as a "young" band?
I guess I don't mind so much. It doesn't matter if people think we are young or old or whatever... I think ultimately we will be judged by our music. Certainly not every band can claim that, but all of my favorites (GBV, Spoon, John Vanderslice, Swearing at Motorists, Lilys) are like that. Really, no gimmicks, just music, and as long as we are making good songs and good recordings, then people will find it. For the people who just discover it, it will be considered "young" to some extent.

Was 2004 the first time the band made it out to SxSW in Austin, and what was that like?
No we were there in "03, and I was there in "02 (w/Spoon). It is always a fucking circus! At times that is great and at others times it sucks. There are great things, like a million bands all within a mile of each other and parties until dawn. But there is always a real heavy "scene" element that is off-putting and lame. I think I have always played on Thursday, hung out and had a great time on Friday, and hung out and wanted to kill people on Saturday...

Note: Early this year saw the re-release of The Oranges Band's first two EPs, repackaged as one album. It certainly says something that their oldest material is still viable as more than just novelty. It's safe to say Kuebler has reached veteran status by now, and I think he's even doing some solo stuff now too. Time will tell what happens with The Oranges Band in the future, but you can rest assured that Roman Kuebler will still be playing music.

www.theorangesband.com

2004 "Two Thousands" (Morphius)
2003 "All Around" (Lookout!)
2002 "On TV" (Lookout!)
2001 "Nine Hundred Miles of Fucking Hell" (Morphius)
2000 "The Five Dollars Ep" (Morphius)

I have always played on Thursday, hung out and had a great time on Friday, and hung out and wanted to kill people on Saturday.

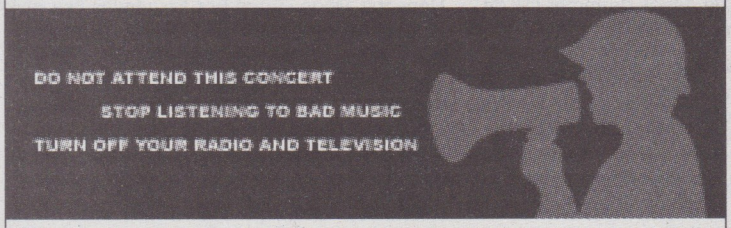
You Have Bad Taste In Music

by Mary Wistrom

You find yourself standing in line to see your favorite band, you see a man approach dressed in a black robe, army helmet and toting a megaphone. "What the hell is this idiot doing?", you think to yourself. He begins to speak, you listen, curiously, thinking, "Wow this is cool he's talking about my favorite band." You begin to get excited. Then suddenly you understand what this man is telling you.

You have bad taste in music.

Eman is on a mission. If not to cure, at least to inform the misguided youth of today, to their face, that they have bad taste in music. Through various elaborately versed (and funny) confrontations with a bull horn, Eman confronts people waiting in lines to see bad music. The genuis part is that when he first starts to speak, the crowd thinks he's down with the band. The best is when the crowd realizes this guy is totally fucking with them proclaiming: "You have bad taste in muisc". But he not only chastizes, he gives 3 simple rules to cure their bad taste in music.



What motivated you to start your crusade against listeners of bad music? Was there a specific band or event?

Eman: I just wanted to do my own Heavy Metal Parking lot... have you seen that? Its an old documentary you can see it at planetkrulik.com, but all he does is take a camera into a parking lot at a Judas Priest concert in... 1985 I think, and filmed the crowd. It's just a great slice of Americana. So I thought it would be cool to take a camera around different bands and see what the different fans looked like and what their scene of bad music was. What I consider bad music. It was just going to be a short film just for me. It wasn't going to be a website. I was going to send to my parents and some friends. There was definitely no grand plan.

When did you start doing these videos?

June 2003, the Justin Timberlake / Christina Aguilera one was my first. I don't really have a problem with boy bands, just the adults who buy it.

Have you ever been attacked while exposing people to their bad taste in music?

The biggest problem we have had was with security of all people. You hear stories about how inane, irrational, and thickheaded security is, but when you see it, its no joke. We were at the Avalon, standing on public property, and had just started to speak, when 5 big bouncers came and chest bumped us (me and my camera man) off the curb and into the street. They hit the pause button on the camera. Would have been good to have that on tape. These are pop bands and their fans, not metal bands. I know there are bands out there whose fans would kick my ass, but these aren't those bands.

Who would you pick as the top 3 bands currently putting out bad music?

Toby Keith is top of the list. Let me think, I don't know. I don't watch TV or listen to the radio. It sounds so hippy, but if you remove yourself, the Jessica and Ashley Simpsons of the world don't affect you. It can't be this hard to think of 3. I think its more genres of music that are bad. Nowadays it's the emo screamo bands, before it was the nu metal bands. Bands have become like cover bands, 1 decent band and 5000 others who sound exactly the same. And I think it's brilliant that Godsmack is named the same as an Alice in Chains song. They could go play somewhere and introduce themselves like, "Hello Seattle! We are Dirt, Track #8!" I didn't really answer your question, but definitely Toby Keith.

How long do you plan on continue doing these videos?

I was going to stop recently, but the Story of the Year video got me fired up again. Its just a creative outlet for me, it has to go somewhere and grow or stop.

Find out if YOU have bad taste in music.
www.youhavebadtaste.com

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SCATTERTHEASHES

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2004 "Devout: The Modern Hymn" (Epitaph)

By Eric W. Alexy

Formed in May 2001 in Smyrna, Tenn., Scatter The Ashes came together when a persistent Daryl Stamps, now the band's frontman, bothered then Point of You? drummer Napier to work on some music with him.

"I finally committed myself to helping him out," Napier says.

The band soon became a full-time project for all of its members (Guitarist "Bob" Farmer and bassist Matt McCord round out the group), and, as Napier puts it, "Somehow it evolved into this."

How are things with Epitaph so far?
It's a beautiful marriage. It's very friendly. We'll go in there and everybody hangs out and grabs a few Red Bulls. Those guys are all about helping us. Bret Gurewitz, he's the coolest fucking guy ever. A few weeks ago, we were in town and he invited us over for dinner. We had dinner with him and he took us out to Anchorman. Not many bands get to have those connections with their boss.

Are you still in that development deal with Island?
Yeah. That was the first record deal we were ever offered. You can ask any band, the first record deal you're offered, you're pretty much gonna sign it. It just so happened that the first label ever interested in us was Island/Def Jam, a major label. It's scary, but the deal wasn't bad. We didn't have a van, we didn't have recordings - they were offering all this. It's weird to be in between labels of sorts. But whatever happens, it's gonna happen for the best. We're totally prepared for the whole ride, we're a career ride. We're down for the long haul.

If Island decides they like "Devout" and want to sign you guys full on, are they entitled to release your next 6-7 albums like most major label deals entail?
Three, I believe. It's very up in the air. ... We have a really good lawyer.

What's with the Island Records logo on the back of your current CD though?
That was part of the deal. The CD is by Island, and it's through Epitaph, and Epitaph puts it out as their roster. If Island decides they don't want to pick us up, then we're completely signed by Epitaph. It's much like a minor league baseball deal.

You can say what you will about Google, but the fact of the matter is, it has made the internet what it is today: a pleathora of information and records that would otherwise be unavailable to the masses. A communication medium based on convenicence, a vast wasteland of pranksters and ,uh, porn. The latter of which is where Scatter The Ashes drummer Dillion Napier has benefited the most.

In doing research for this interview, I found a site that says you're getting married.
Yeah, yeah, me and Winona man.

That's true?
[Laughing] No, that's not true. Did you believe it for a minute?

It had me going for a second.
I think you should say it's true though anyway.

Have you been infatuated with her for a long time?
I love her, dude. She's my one. She's my Cassandra. You know, like Wayne's World?

You don't care if she steals your clothes or your drums though?
No, I don't really care.

What would you do if you saw her?
I've always told people when they're going out in Hollywood and if I'm around and I'm staying in or something, 'Well if you see Winnona or Dave Grohl, call me!'

Have you seen anybody famous hanging out in L.A. yet?
Not this time around. We played the Troubadour in Februay and Andre 3000 was there. We were playing with Letter Kills, and he came out to see them. He watched us and people that were there told me he was bobbing his head the whole time. He told Daryl, our singer, that he had some sweet moves.

Your preferece: The Smiths, Depeche Mode, Tears For Fears or The Cure?
I'm gonna have to say The Smiths, as a whole. The Cure, like I love their darker stuff, but I absolutely hate their other stuff. I love Depeche Mode. Tears For Fears was like my favorite band when I was 2 years old or something. A few of their hits and their other songs are just great, but, again, as a whole, I'd say The Smiths. But, still, I don't think of them as a great, great band. I kind of feel like they were overrated. They were good for what they did. I'm not crazy, crazy in love with The Smiths like a lot of people are.

You guys get compared to a lot of bands. I see the Refused comparison a bit, but Joy Division, not so much. Maybe a little in the vocals.
That's something that we just listen to a lot. I don't think it comes through on the album very much either. Our album's kind of dark, it's kind of goth. That's where it comes from. Our newer stuff is on that kind tangent.

Winona Ryder announces plans for marriage with Dillon Napier, rock drummer of Scatter the Ashes.
or...
Don't believe everything you read on the internet.

Los Angeles, CA (PRWEB) June 30, 2004 — Though the matrimony date has not been set as of press time, it was announced early Monday morning that actress Winona Ryder is to wed Dillon Napier, drummer of rock band Scatter the Ashes.

The unforeseen announcement came as a surprise to practically everyone, as the couple had only been dating for a rash two weeks. "We're in love", Ryder clarified, "I feel like a brand new chapter is opening in my life, almost because of Dillon, a much needed new chapter, and I'm so excited that I've found him."

The underground rock artist Napier, who beats the skins for the space rock band Scatter the Ashes, met the recently single Winona in a Los Angeles nightclub. "I had heard she was dating that fruit from Bright Eyes a while back, so I really had no intentions of making a move on her when we met, until she filled me in on their breakup, then I knew it was time to turn on the Don Juan fumes!"

Napier's band Scatter the Ashes recently signed a recording contract with Epitaph Records, based out of Los Angeles. Their debut album 'Devout/The Modern Hymn' was recently released, to immense acceptance.

Official date of Napier and Ryder's marriage to be announced.

as found at 'publicity' site PRWeb:
www.prweb.com/releases/2004/6/prweb137648.htm

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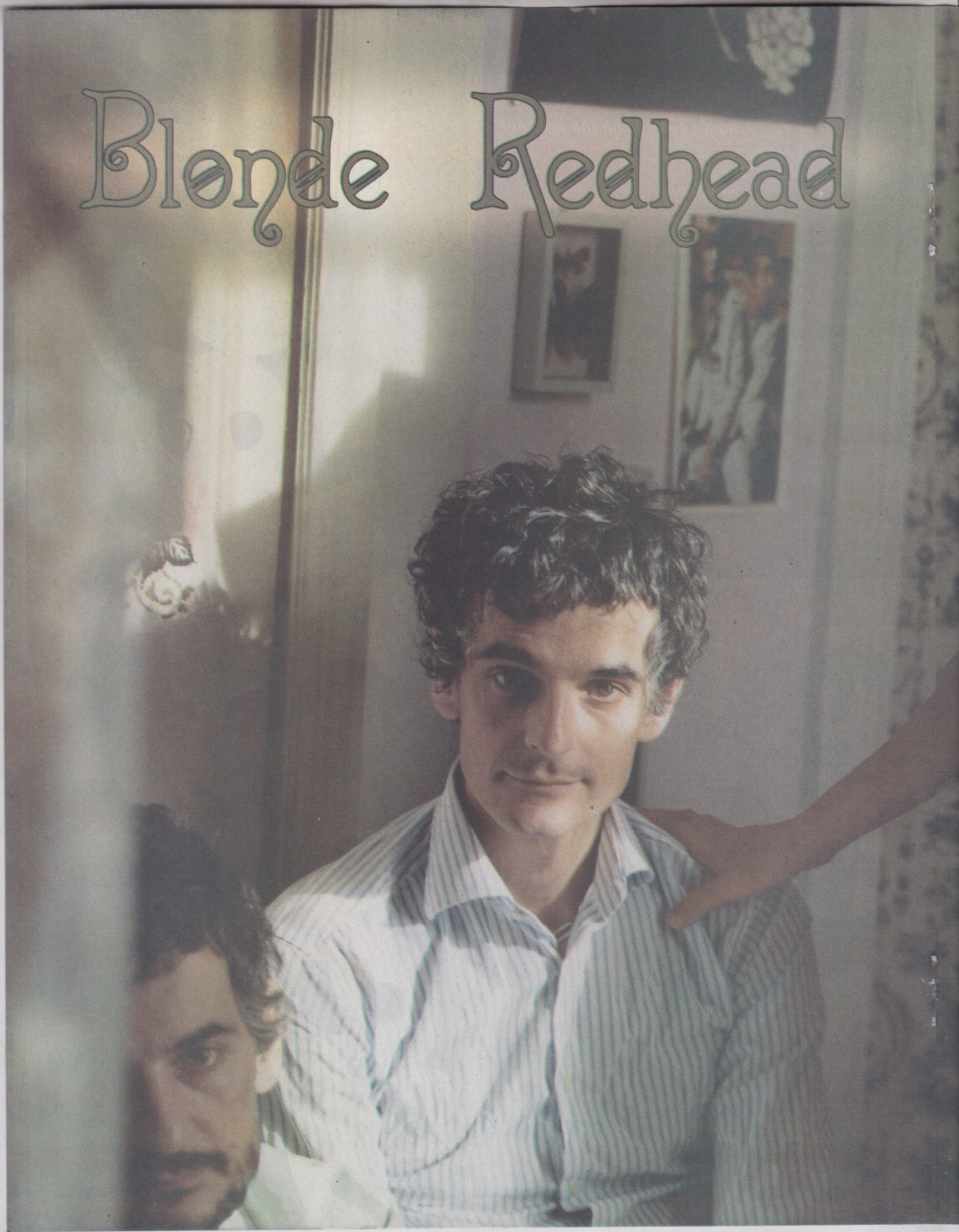

Blonde Redhead

by Gordon Downs

It was a scrumptious summer evening in the year 2000 when I would first come across the eclectic sounds of Blonde Redhead. I had spent the better half of the day and evening in Los Angeles, wheat-pasting posters around Hollywood for some made-for-TV movie starring Andrew McCarthy (Less Than Zero kicked ass!) It was a shit job, but it paid well and I got all the free Andrew McCarthy posters I wanted! So after a long night of making a motherfucking mess of my truck, my buddy and me hopped on Interstate-5 South and headed back towards Tijuana. We arrived at our destination a couple of hours later: a small house located in the backyard of a less-than savory suburb in San Diego. My friend at the time was sharing close quarters with some dude who was really into graffiti and shit like that. As we entered the small domicile we found all the lights shut off with my friend's roommate sitting rather motionless in front of single lit candle, and a small radio that was playing some strangely interesting music. The dude sat there as he acknowledged us, looking as if he were in a trance or all smacked out. He could have been, I dunno? He looked pretty stoned to say the least. We exchanged our salutations and I immediately asked him what it was that he was listening to? "Blonde Redhead." He replied, with a slight but certain smug tone in his voice. "Oh?" I replied, "I've heard of them," I said, trying to regain some ground with this prickly hipster thief. Though honestly adding, "But I haven't actually ever heard their music before." It was true. As it would turn out, I had been completely oblivious to the existence of one of the best bands to emerge from the nineties.

Maybe it was the fact that I had been behind the wheel of mini truck for twelve hours, maybe I had accidentally eaten some wheat paste earlier in the day, or maybe it was the pot I had been smoking - but as I sank down on the couch in that tiny house that late scrumptious summer night back in 2000, I became an instant fan of Blonde Redhead. I was physically exhausted and mentally hallucinating, so I was very much in tune with what was coming out of the small but effective speakers. Strange and hypnotic sounds, with a melancholy vibe as thick as an Apple Bottom! I had seen advertisements for Blonde Redhead in various publications at the time: small red squares, with headshots of what I thought were two people. An Asian woman, and some dude, their eyes blacked out with a pen. I was curious but never made an attempt to seek out their music. However after that first experience of hearing them, I decided to take a look into their catalog.

It would turn out that the album I came across that summer in 2000 was Blonde Redhead's fifth album, "Melody Of Certain Damaged Lemons," which was released through Touch & Go Records, the label which the band had called home since 1997 when they released their third album, "Fake Can Be Just As Good."

My favorite records I think are the ones that have a mood to them, where you can just sink yourself into them without too many distractions.

Descriptively, it's hard to tell a person that has not heard them before what Blonde Redhead actually sound like. All of their albums contain a variety of different musical elements that have become their distinct and eclectic sound. Taking a general stab at trying though: Sonic indie-rock with a subtle European flare to it - emphasis on the word "sonic."

Since forming during 1993 in New York City, Blonde Redhead have released a total of six albums, the most recent being "Misery Is A Butterfly" which was released in the Spring of 2004 via 4AD Records. The groups name is derived from a song by the eighties no-wave band, DNA. Consisting of Italian twin brothers, Simone (drums, keyboards) and Amedeo Pace (guitar, vocals) and Kazu Makino (guitars, keyboards, vocals,) Blonde Redhead were originally a quartet before they became one of the most talented trios in modern rock.

It's an extremely brisk afternoon in San Diego, as I sit inside the seaside establishment of Cane's Bar & Grill located in Mission Beach. Amedeo Pace sits across from me looking extremely over dressed for "the beach." He wears a virgin white shirt with ruffles, many, many ruffles and a deep bluish/blackish overcoat with matching pants and extremely expensive looking shoes. Boots even! There I said it! The motherfucker was wearing boots! It looked like he could've had a sword too...maybe. John Frusciante of the Red Hot Chili Peppers is onstage preparing to sound check, as he will be opening tonight for Blonde Redhead under the moniker of his side project, Performance 6.

When I ask Amedeo, about the lack of bass in their live shows, he replies with an obvious and humble Italian accent, "We did have a bass player at the beginning of the band, there were two bass players." The fourth and former member of the band was Maki Takahashi, a friend and fellow art student from New York. But it would be shortly after the release of their debut album, "Blonde Redhead" (released thru Sonic Youth's drummer's Steve Shelly's label, Smells Like Records) that Takahashi would leave the band. "We just felt it wasn't working with us." Pace continues. "The sound was kind of cluttered, and the bass (pauses) it felt like it kind of took up a lot of the space onstage and in the music. So we got rid of the bass, and it was actually really messed up at first." He willing admits. "The first few shows without the bass player were like a real nightmare. But then it was good, because it showed all of our weaknesses between the three of us musically, so we had to kind of strengthen within the trio and compensate for the bass. I think we've kind of developed something that's working now."

With a large cult following both here and in Europe, there's obviously a collective chemistry within the trio. On their previous albums like, "La Mia Vita Violenta" the band was consistent with making a cohesively eclectic sound-scape. The tunes would range from mellow/melancholy sonic lullabies, to quick cutting guitar riffs and melodies that sound the way Darvon feels.

The title of the latest album, "Misery Is A Butterfly" suggests a much more somber mood that is quite prevalent throughout the entire album. Though the record does contain several upbeat songs such as, "Falling Man," "Maddening Cloud" and the closing track "Equus," the album has an extremely more than in

general depressingly relaxing vibe throughout the majority of it. In 1994 Kurt Cobain sang about, "missing the comfort in being sad". In 2004, Blonde Redhead provide that comfort and sadness at the same time on "Misery Is A Butterfly."

"On this record," Pace continues, "we really wanted to have a feeling throughout the whole record. It does flow a bit more," he admits. "I feel like it does. I think [the new record] is a, (pauses) it jokes around a little more. My favorite records I think are the ones that have a mood to them, where you can just sink yourself into them without too many distractions."

Something Blonde Redhead fans are finding more interesting than distracting is the fact that they've switched record labels, going from the Chicago based Touch & Go Records, to the groundbreaking European label 4AD.

"We finished the record actually a year ago today." Amedeo continues. "I remember the war started when we went into the studio. Then it took us about a year to find a label that we wanted to do it with, and for them to put it out." When I inquire if there was a specific reason for switching from Touch & Go to 4AD, Pace replies, "The change, (pauses) because we... well, first of all, our records in Europe were never dealt with in a good way. As well as we think they could have been. So we thought it would be really nice to on a label that is strong in Europe as well as here. It's good to push yourself and try new things. And 4AD was so enthusiastic about the new album, and they were so into it. I felt like Touch & Go was into it, but somehow I had the feeling that they really wouldn't understand it as well."

I ask him how he felt the response has been so far (the album had only been out a couple of weeks at the time) he begins to reply, "I don't know why people have different ideas about it. Some people say it's very melancholy, some people feel like it's very claustrophobic..." at this point John Frusciante suddenly plugs in his guitar to his amplifier and continues his sound check. Amedeo looks down at my micro-cassette recorder and laughs. We both point outside towards the Pacific and head for the door.

As we sit on the boardwalk, his brother Simone, and another individual from their posse, (both overdressed as well) frolic about on the sandy and vacant beach in front of us. Early bird indie-rockers, beach goers and the local beach scum all shoot stares as they pass by us on their bikes and roller blades. Actually, the indie-rockers weren't so much shooting stares as they were casually trying not to notice this dude with an extremely ruffly shirt sitting on the boardwalk while some dude in a flannel shirt is holding a tape recorder up to his chest.

As we settle down outside I ask him about the concert when a disgruntled fan through a penny at him when they were opening up for the Chili Peppers years earlier. "It was a dime actually." He says with a laugh. "I just felt kind of ridiculous. I laughed, because first of all, the audience was as far as the water (he gestures towards the shore which is about 40-50 yards away from us). And I couldn't believe that somebody actually threw it in my fucking mouth. But, I laughed and thought to myself, 'This is ridiculous, what are we doing here?'"

He sighs and looks at the beach, and comments on how attractive the Pacific Ocean looks as his brother and cohort return from their brief stroll on the waterfront. I ask him if the view is similar at Coney Island? "I don't go to Coney Island that much." Is his response.

As we end our interview I ask him a question I ask to all of the folks I talk to: Do you have a message for the kids? He looks at me rather puzzled, as if no one had ever asked him what he wanted to say to the kids

I feel real negative about the world, so I can't help but look at young kids and saying 'It's going to be tough'.

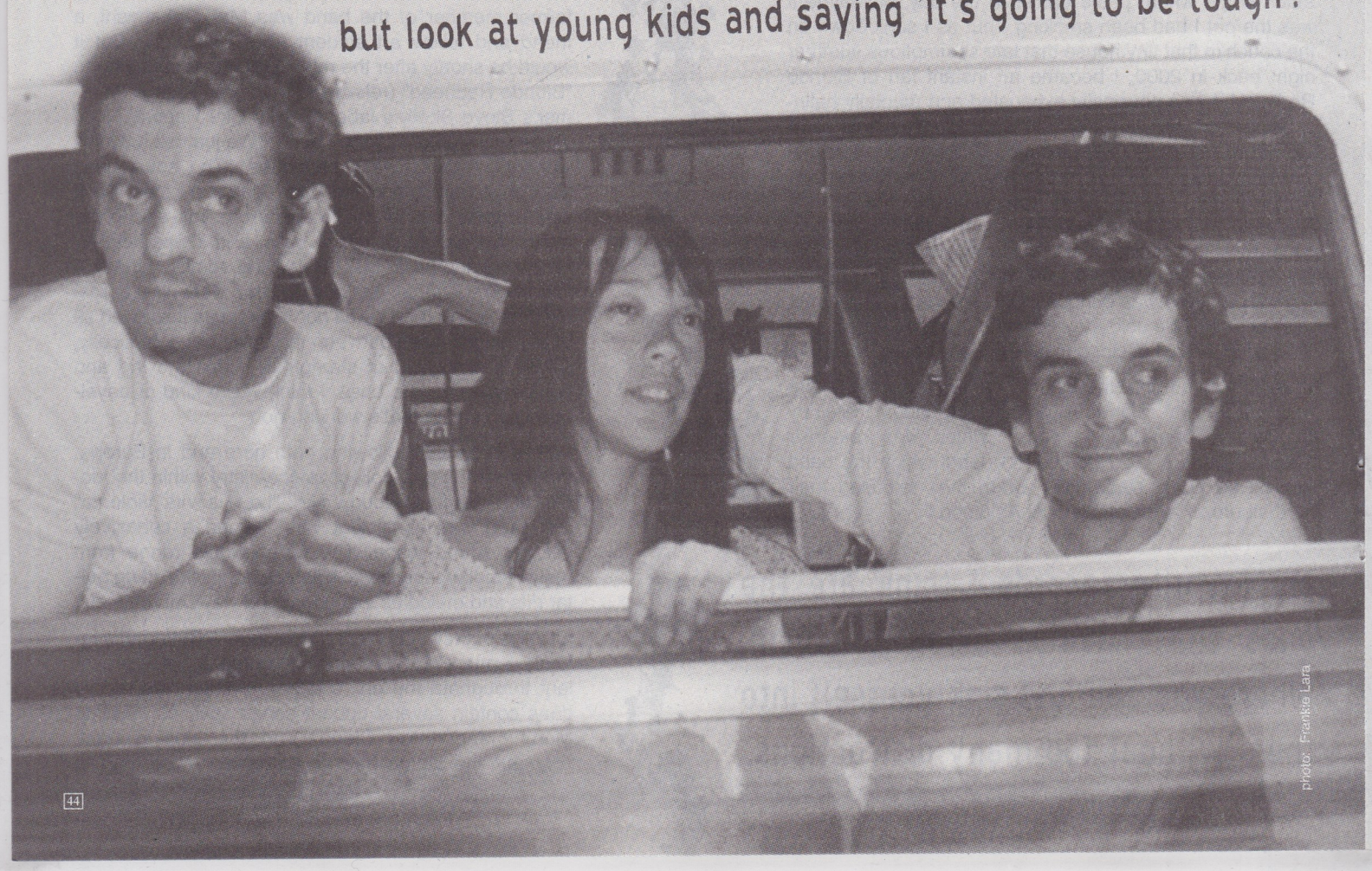


photo: Frankie Lara

before? He thinks about it for a moment, and then the puzzled look on his face turns chagrin. "I'm feeling pretty negative." He replies earnestly. "I feel real negative about the world, so I can't help but look at young kids and saying 'It's going to be tough.' And I wish it was different. I feel like it's going to get harder and harder with everything, like the environment, weapons, wars - who's going to survive it?"

Being that this was before the recent presidential elections, I tell him I don't think that much will change in the future. And as far as the presidential elections go, I told him I felt that no matter how much or how hard the Democrats try, Bush would end up staying in office another four years. "I believe in democracy." He replies, adding, "I hope he doesn't win."

"A week I think?" Is the response I get from Kazu Makino, when I ask her how long they've had off since ending the last leg of their tour? It's been a few months since I had spoken with Amedeo, and Blonde Redhead find themselves in Newport, Kentucky on the second night of their fall tour of the United States. "We did totally different things but we were quite active still." I ask her if they've been writing any new material since releasing "Misery Is A Butterfly"? "Yeah, I recorded something for someone else," she replies with her hushed and seductive voice, "but we haven't recorded anything for ourselves". When I ask whom she recorded with she simply replies, "Prefuse 73." Originally, New York flanksters, Liars were set to open up for Blonde Redhead during this tour of the states, making it one of the hottest tickets of the fall touring season. Unfortunately though, Liars ended up backing out leaving the opening slot on the tour to Helio Sequence. "Yeah," Makino adds, "it was quite disappointing, but you know, stuff happens so we dealt with it. I'm sure we'll have another chance to play with them. Things happen for reasons, so I don't have any bad feelings about that anymore. We've got another good band to tour with, so you know..." When I inquire as to how they came across Helio Sequence as a potential opening act, she replies, "The Secret Machines. I just placed phone calls to other bands and asked for help and they all came up with great ideas. And in the end result I know [about] many more good bands. So it all worked out."

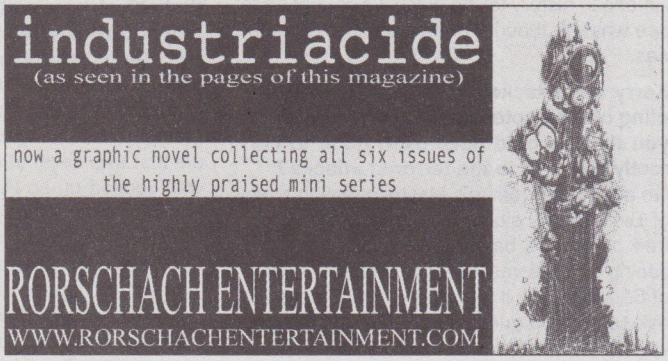
With the presidential elections finally being over, and anti-Bush sentiment running higher than ever before, I ask about her opinion on the GOP's recent victory? "Horrible." Is her reply, adding, "I don't even know one Bush supporter, I don't know how this is even possible? We can't vote. So there's nothing we could do but just watch it happen and it's quite painful."

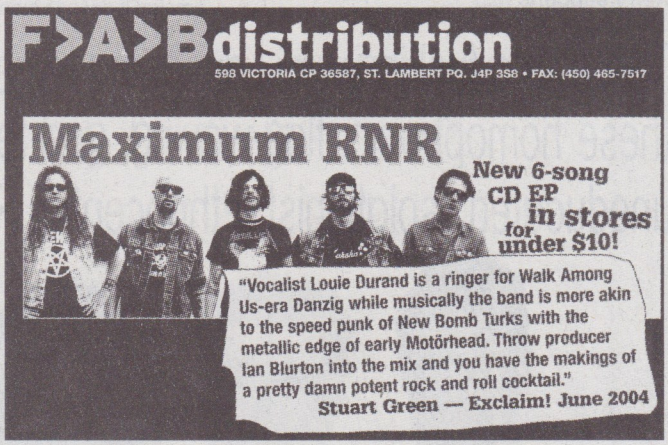
Painful indeed, but apparently America has spoken, and apparently what America wants is exactly that: pain! Bring on the pain!

In a pivotal year for America and the world; an election year that would lead to serious ramifications of world politics and social change; it's comforting to know that Blonde Redhead will be there, providing a certain comfort in being sad.

www.blonde-redhead.com

2004 "Misery is a Butterfly" (4AD)
2004 "Equus" 7" (4AD)
2004 "Elephant Woman" 7" (4AD)
2000 "Melodie Citronique" EP (Touch and Go)
2000 "Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons" (Touch and Go)
1998 "In An Expression Of the Inexpressible" (Touch and Go)
1998 "Slogan/Limited Conversation" 7" (Touch and Go)
1997 "Fake Can Be Just As Good" (Touch and Go)
1997 "Symphony of Treble"/"Kazuality" 7" (Touch and Go)
1995 "La Mia Vita Violenta" (Smells Like)
1995 Split 7" w/ Sammy 7" - (Nipple Hardness Factor)
1995 "Flying Douglas" / "Harmony" 7" (Rough Trade)
1995 "10 Feet High" / "Valentine" 7" (Smells Like)
1994 "S/T" (Smells Like)
1994 "Vague" / "Jet Star" 7" (Smells Like)
1993 "Big Song" / "Amescream" 7" (OXO)





NOFX: Rocking The Vote

By James Wright

NOFX frontman Fat Mike is a legend within the punk rock community. Not only did NOFX influence many of today's modern day punk rock acts but he is the founder of Fat Wreck Chords, the label responsible for quality releases from the likes of Strung Out, Sick Of It All, Anti-Flag, the Mad Caddies and 88 Fingers Louie.

Fat Mike has always been socially as well as politically conscious, speaking out against animal cruelty, censorship and politics. Forming punkvoter.com with other members of the punk community and releasing two compilations entitled "Rock Against Bush", Mike has been devoted to rallying the troops and getting them informed about the issues.

Now with one of the most crucial elections in American history taking place we caught up to see what he thought of the candidate's agendas.

Kerry has attacked President Bush's handling of the September 11th crisis, what do you think should have been done to correctly respond to the terrorist attacks?
Go after the terrorists? Maybe question a few of Bin Laden's siblings before giving them a free plane ride back to Saudi Arabia? And seeing how the vast majority of hijackers were of Saudi decent, it would have made sense to ask some hard questions of them. If Canada were to attack the U.S. would we retaliate by nuking China?

Bush adamantly opposes abortion while Kerry supports it....
Bush doesn't just oppose it, he has promised to appoint judges to the Supreme Court that would effectively outlaw access to safe and legal abortion. That's one of the very distinct issues where those two gray haired dudes differ, Kerry understands that someone who has had to experience rape or incest, doesn't need to endure any more hardship. It's just another example of how conservatives values are selfish values.

Right to lifers would argue that life begins at conception...
Right to lifers are also ALWAYS for the death penalty and most likely supportive of Bush's attacks on Iraq. Life may begin at conception, but it ends when Bush-sanctioned Daisy Cutters are allowed to be dropped on areas populated by civilians; over 10,000 civilians, in fact.

Kerry voted for the war in Iraq and now opposes it, it seems as though he's tailoring his message t his audience. Don't you think we need a President that will give us a straight answer about his position and where he stands?
Yes, Kerry did support the actions taken against Iraq based upon what the Bush administration told America. We all supported it because they told us that they had ties to Al Qaeda, had nukes, etc. Turns out that was never true, and much of the "intelligence" was cooked up so Bush could go to Iraq. This was something that Cheney and the other authors of the Plan for a New American Century scripted years ago. Sources WITHIN the White House said that Bush was intent on going to Iraq all along. It appears we all got hoodwinked; Me, the world, and even Kerry. People are allowed to change their minds and I think whoever the President is should be encouraged to use reasoning in his judgment. If I get in my van, start driving, and pull over when the engine begins to smoke, it doesn't mean that I have changed my views on the value of driving. Sometimes we as humans need to react accordingly based on circumstances that arise. It's foolish to never be responsive or aware of change.

Vice President Dick Cheney sits as a retainer to Halliburton (a company manufacturing war products and machinery), don't you think that President Bush should have addressed this to the American public?
Uhhh, yeah. But lots of glaring hypocrisies can be found in this administration. Even before he was President, things were being corrupted. The woman who ultimately decided the outcome of the Florida election should not have been guaranteed a cabinet position. An attorney for Bush during the election outcome ballyhoo should NOT have been the son of one of the Supreme Court Judges (Scalia). Of course after he does sneak into the White House he appoints an eco-terrorist Secretary of Interior who says forests are "spreading like a plague" in America, and the Labor Secretary he appoints is a life-long corporate shill. I'm not at all surprised about our government's ties to arms manufacturers. in the last four years this country has been rapidly evolving into a military-industrial complex.

While parent's children are dying overseas, Halliburton and Dick Cheney are producing record breaking profits....
Well, it's very tragic and it's one of the reasons we've been so involved in this upcoming election. At some point, people need to snap out of it and realize what this administration is doing to the country.

The one thing that bothered me during the debate was the fact that neither really addressed anything about the economy or issues directly facing Americans besides terrorism or Foreign affairs...
Well terrorism is the key to Bush's re-election and they've done everything in their power to keep us all scared. The country is going down the tubes in so many ways, they need to do something to keep our minds off of things and propaganda smoke screens is all they've got and all they've ever had. If you watch the PBS "Frontline" documentary about the candidates, you see that Bush Jr. won the Texas Gubernatorial election based on scare tactics. His entire platform and ad campaign all revolved around rising crime and they had these horrific commercials with people getting mugged and shit. Truth is, crime was on the decline in Texas the entire time Bush was running his "sky is falling" advertising blitz. Same stuff is happening now, they let us know ALL the time that the end is nigh.

Despite the lack of jobs, the Republicans would say that profits are up, allowing for economic growth of big business, thus creating more jobs...
I don't deny that the rich are getting richer, but I've got enough dough and so do Bush's cronies.

How important is this election to the average American and why should they vote?
It's the most important election of my lifetime, that's for sure. See, Bush doesn't want to be the NEXT President, he wants to be the LAST President. This guy believes in the Rapture

There's no fucking way I am going to come together with these homophobic, flag-waving, god-fearing, gun-toting, uneducated, isolationist, ethnocentric REDNECKS.

and shit and the way things are going, he very well may bring it about himself. Imagine all the fucked up stuff he did in his first four years when he had to get the country's approval for re-election...who knows what he'll try now that he has nothing to lose. Now, how does Ralph Nader factor into this election and why should Nader supporters vote for Kerry if they don't support him and his platform? Ralph Nader is one of the most accomplished Americans alive today. Unfortunately, his new campaign is almost entirely backed by the GOP, which pretty much says it all.

What exactly are you trying to accomplish with Punkvoter.com?
We'd like to build a voter bloc so large that we'll be taken seriously by lawmakers. Like the League of Woman Voters or the NRA. If enough of us stand united, politicians will have to take notice. We're also trying to bring back the element of activism to the scene. For the last few years bands have singing about high school and girls, but we're hoping to revive some of the spirit that bands like Dead Kennedys and Clash brought to the scene.

Do you think there is a certain amount of prejudice towards you because you're not exactly the type of person who sends these types of messages?
I think everyone should be encouraged to get involved, not just the elite. That includes: Cab drivers, bartenders, dentists, and maybe even punk rockers.

As we all know now, President Bush has been re-elected, what is your reaction to the election?
We gave it our best shot. Senator Kerry today said that now we need to come together and heal as a nation. FUCK THAT. There's no fucking way I am going to come together with these homophobic, flag-waving, god-fearing, gun-toting, uneducated, isolationist, ethnocentric REDNECKS. We live in a country that's in a shroud of ignorance. We do not compromise or come together with them. We fight them and everything they stand for. We as a community have to take care of each other and respect each other because apparently our current government has no interest in that. They do not care about gay people, they do not care about sick people, they do not care about black people, they do not care about poor people, they do not care about the rest of the world, they do not care about our environment, and they especially don't care about a woman's right to choose. We may have lost the battle, shit we may have lost the war...but we are not losing our minds. WE ARE RIGHT... THEY ARE WRONG... just because we seem to be the minority doesn't mean we come together with them. We continue to fight.... and drink... and try to have a good fucking time. That's my plan anyway.

What do you want to say to the people that supported the efforts of Punkvoter.com?
Youth turnout was up 9 percentage points. However, fear-stricken homophobic turnout was also up by an amazing amount. Nonetheless, we are proud of the tens of thousands of punks who took to the streets to make their opinions known. (America clearly saw your efforts, your DIY signs and posters, the concerts that you held, the thousands of you that volunteered, and the overall energy that was created). While there were millions of voter-registration efforts out there, with your help we were able to accomplish something very different. We were able to disseminate information on how all these issues truly affect young voters. We worked to make sure young people got this information even if the politicians never talked directly to our nation's youth. We provided you with credible sources and facts to educate your friends and family members. It was great to hear about how many of you shared the documentaries from the "Rock Against Bush" CD's and used the reasons to Rock Against Bush on your own websites and zines as well. We succeeded in engaging hundreds of thousands of voters with real reasons why Bush truly sucks. We are honored to have had the amount of support from the entire community. Huge thanks go out to the hundreds of bands that helped this effort, the dozens of record labels that supported the cause, over 600,000 of you that bought Rock Against Bush Vol 1 and Vol 2, the thousands of you that made your own flyers, signs, websites, t-shirts, etc. And to the millions of you that visit the website to help us achieve over 500,000 unique visitors a month! (over 20,000,000 hits a month) All of these efforts helped us communicate our message to millions of voters.

If Jared from Subway challenged you to a sub eating contest, would you accept?
I'll accept, but it'll be on my terms. No Subway, for starters. Maybe Dim Sum?

www.nofxofficialwebsite.com
www.punkvoter.com

the Start

by James Wright

When former Snot drummer Jamie Miller started a new project with Ex-Human Waste Project frontwoman Aimee Echo, they both knew they wanted to create something completely different from what was happening in the mainstream. Out of that desire for originality, The Start was born.

Unlike anything currently happening in music, The Start are the cure for Nu-metal and the anti-venom to screamo. Miller's trance like guitar riffs create the atmosphere in which Aimee's surreal lyrics can grasp on to the listener like a predator stalks it prey. Their sound is one part David Bowie, one part Depeche Mode and another part punk rock. The Start are a truly unique musical experience.

After a releasing their debut, "Shakedown", with the Firm Management's failed new label, The Start have returned hungrier than ever with, "Initiation" through Nitro Records. The album is an explosive musical statement devoid of trends.

Your debut record, "Shakedown" was released through the Firm Management team's failed label, what exactly happened with that?

Aimee: Yes, it was a major label technically, but it was really just a processing and distribution deal with Geffen that the Firm had. They didn't really have a major label staff. There were four people working for the label that we were on. Everybody was like, "Hey, you're on Geffen." We were like, "No, our record was distributed by Geffen." It's a little bit different. What happened was that the Firm at that point had branched out in a lot of different directions financially and they didn't feel they wanted to put any more money into the record label. They closed the record label at that point, which was about four months in.

You guys worked with Josh Abraham. Was he associated with the record label at all?

What initially happened was that when we first started the band, there were a few labels that were interested in us and Josh had gotten a deal with a record label called 143. It was distributed by Atlantic. I've known Josh for a while and it really felt like it was going to be a good place for us to go. They couldn't get us on the Atlantic label, and then Josh's label closed. The Firm at that point said that they would buy our record from them and they would start a label with us being their first act. Four months after that, they decided not to be a record label anymore. That's the history of what happened with that record.

Do the label politics sour your love of music at times?

Not of music. Never. As far as being in the music industry, yes. Every day. It's not just record label stuff, it's everything from Fed-Ex not delivering a package on time to us being late for a show because of it. Everything is frustrating. Whenever you put industry into anything, it becomes frustrating.

After everything happened with, "Shakedown" you did the independent thing and bought a van. Is it true that you recorded the "Death by Satellite" EP for $800?

It was less than that. Initially, the original cost was $33. We spent that on plywood. I see where that number comes from, it would have been our rehearsal space that we were renting at the time and the cost of mastering stuff. I guess that adds up to $883 or something like that.

When everything went down with the Firm, did you know that the band would continue and go on independentiy from there?

It was strange because we didn't discuss whether or not we were going to continue or not, we just did. We just did the same thing that we did the day before. We made the EP in our rehearsal space. We did six songs and we did a limited release of 500 copies and they sold really quickly. In that time, we had written three more songs, so we added those to it, went on tour and released it ourselves. We toured around like that for a year until Nitro came into the picture and decided they would like to pick up the EP and give us a record deal.

Have you always had that "Do It Yourself" work ethic, where it's just taking the band, press up some CD's and go on tour without a label, without management, without anybody?

I think we had that ability. When we were with the Firm, they didn't operate that way or necessarily understand operating that way, when I tried to explain that we could do things that would grow the band in a healthy way. When I originally said that I wanted to go on tour,

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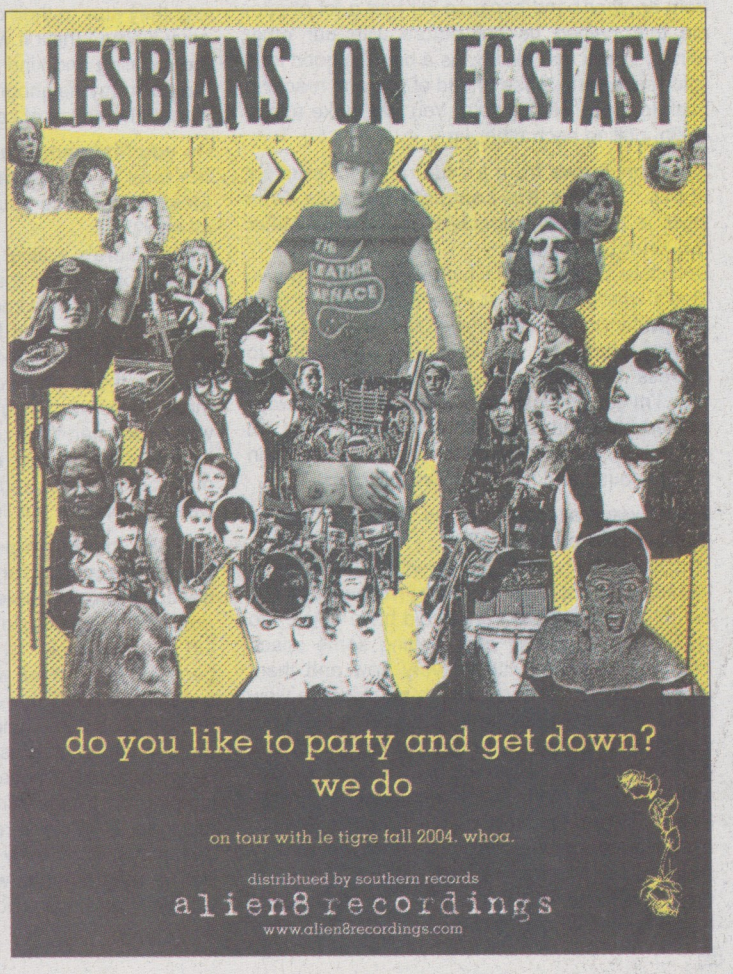
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Whenever you put industry into anything, it becomes frustrating.

they said that it was too early, and I was confused by that. I don't believe in too early for anything. I guess they wanted to do it major label style by touring around and releasing the album. They waited until two weeks before the record came out. To me, that seems silly because I think bands should always be on tour. I think you need to meet new people.

It seems like major label artists usually wait for that one major tour that never really comes.
It's really hard to get people to believe in you. It takes a long time. We were really lucky coming from another band because we had a lot of people that helped us out before with our other bands. I think that ideally, as a band, a good idea is to reach up to those ahead of you and reaching back to those behind you. You just make a long chain, pulling each other up.

The Start draws from a wide range of musical styles. This is the complete opposite from what is probably expected from Jamie Miller (Ex-Snot Drummer).
Definitely. I think that's why he wanted to do this. That's where he was at. He was ready to be a songwriter and a guitar player since he was stuck playing drums for too long. He was ready to express his creative side. As far as my creative side, I'm getting closer to my idea of what I always wanted my band to be like. I think that what I'm doing isn't much different than what I was doing in my previous band [Human Waste Project].

If you were a consumer, is this the type of music you'd be buying?
That's a really difficult question to answer because I'm not used to singing my own praises, but to be honest and frank, I did have a listen to our record yesterday after getting some space from it. I check in with it every now and then. Sometimes it's too hard to have an objective view because you're so close to it. It seems that your view seems to get more objective the further you get away from the recording of it. But I really love this record. It's really funny because I don't really listen to it a lot. We finished it at the end of March. I run into a lot of people who ask me what it sounds like. I figured I should listen to it. I had a really good time listening to it, so I would say, yes, I would buy it if I wasn't me.

Have you went to the store in the past and picked up your record the day it came out?
Oh yea, I think everyone does that. I know people who have sold millions of records and they still buy a good luck copy.

You have a pretty devoted female following. There are tribute sites on the net to you. What's are you feelings on seeing someone so devoted to you and your art?
It's interesting. I'm removed from it emotionally. The me that is on stage is a totally different entity to the me that is off stage. I think it's interesting that people are admiring that side of me. It's amazing that people would put that amount of time into making a web site for me. It's comforting. Most people that I know that make music juggle back and forth from having lots of self-esteem and no amount of self-esteem. Having outside praise is helpful to one's self-esteem. It makes me feel better. Especially at the level that we're at. Some days are really, really hard. To know that I'm making somebody happy gives me a little more motivation when I'm lacking it.

How is touring idependently at your level?
I think that at any level, until you make it really big, you're always cramped for space. I think the most difficult thing to adjust to is the "rootlessness", where you don't have a solid home because you're always on the road. I kind of grew up like that, so it's a little easier for me. But now when I go home and see my friends who have supposed 'normal' lives, where they live in their one house and they stay in their one city, I have moments of envy where I think it would be nice to wake up in the morning and kind of have a routine. To know people in my neighborhood. That kind of familiarity and the sense of community is kind of lacking.

Do you find people assume you must be making tons of money and living the Rock n' Roll lifestyle because you are out playing so many shows?
I think there's a little more realistic viewpoint of music now. I think that a lot of the people who come to our shows know that we're not making a lot of cash. I lived in L.A with about 7 people, a model, a photographer, a couple dogs and a couple cats. It was an awesome four bedroom apartment. There was this guy who lived next to us who was a rock star. When it came out in the press that he was my next door neighbor, it came out that I must be a famous rock star too, which I thought was really funny, but I'm not opposed to it.

You see so many rap-rock bands dying out but the punk scene is thriving. Do you think that's because some people do it for the fame, where some punk bands do it because they have to?
Oh yea, definitely, for sure. It's a little different because you can tell which kind of band they are instantly. A band that has a material motivation usually does something that is current. Once you do something that is current, it can instantly become dated. Those are the people that are jumping on trends. Not that they don't love the music to, but they're really trying to blow up and be famous. Somebody once told me that it looked like we ran from that, which I think is really funny. It's really an unconscious thing. It's just that we have really short attention spans and when it comes to creativity, you don't like to do a lot of the same things that everybody else is doing.

So you don't set out to be different, you just are?
I think so. We consciously do try to stay away from what everyone else is doing so we can stay innovative and creative, otherwise we'd just be copying. I'm not saying that we don't have influences, because we do. Any musician that says they don't have influences is ridiculous. Especially rock and roll being as old as it is, you're just adding your own personality to it.

How do you travel with music?
The amount of records we had between the 4 of us, and our record manager... we had so many CD's and we still do, even though there's several I-Pod's in the band. I used to take 2 medium CD books and two small CD books in the van with me and that's an insane amount of space. Now, I just have my I-Pod.

How has your experience with Nitro been so far?
Aimee: It's definitely different than any label that I've been on. They have a really strong work ethic and they don't like to spend a lot of money. That's the polar opposite from any other label I've been with who likes to spend a lot of money. They're much more focused, and so far, they're a really good match for us. Things could change at any moment, but as it stands right now, we have a great working relationship and things are going well. Fingers crossed. Hopefully, it wont be about that one day [the album release date], hopefully it'll be about the nice development period that it's going to take.

Are the independent labels developing bands?
I think it's been like that traditionally for years. Independent labels were the breeding grounds where major labels would sleep in. In the past ten years, it seems that these major labels were just sweeping up these really young bands and not developing them.

How do you describe your music when someone asks you what your band sounds like?
I usually say that we're a true alternative band and then I get scoffed at. The definition to that is 'different than the mainstream' and that's the only way to describe us. The only thing about that, is that it leaves people lacking an actual comparison. I don't think we technically fit in any particular way. We're really just a rock band. We can't really be put in any particular lot. There are so many different elements. Categorizing is a human thing, whether it's music or food. If you take a mystery food and give it to someone, they'll automatically say, "It's this mixed with this." That's the same with music, "That track reminds me of this band." People automatically put something into a category. It makes people feel comfortable. If you're not categorized, it gives you a really great chance or a really lousy chance. People can't get their heads around it.

2004 "Initiation" (Nitro)
2003 "Death Via Satellite" (Nitro)
2001 "Shakedown" (Geffen)

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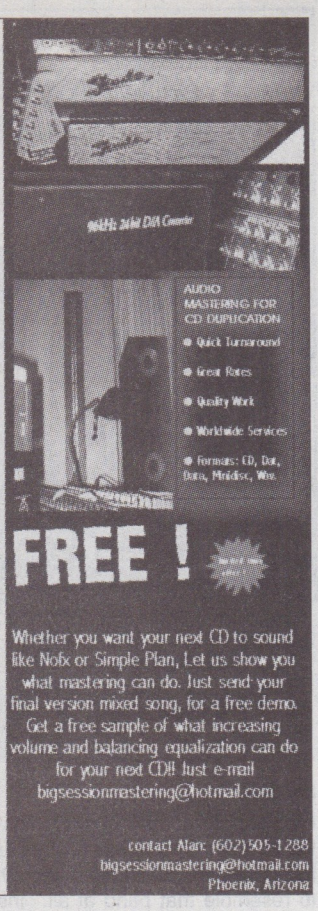
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FREE MORAL AGENTS

by PR!

Free Moral Agents is Ikey Owens (master pianist of Mars Volta, member of past groups like De Facto, Long Beach Dub Allstars and Sublime) mostly on his own, aside from help via J, Mendee Ichikawa and Jeff Harris. Although there is a Mars Volta sample on the album, don't expect this to resemble that band at all. Instead, Ikey takes his proven approach at music, creating an avant guard jazz hip hop sound that is more passive than active. After a vinyl split and an EP, the Free Moral Agents spawned their debut album, "Everybody's Favorite Weapon", off of fellow Mars Volta band mate Omar Rodriguez's label, Gold Standard Laboratories. An amazing, but short album (just under 50 minutes - long for most bands but you'll want more). After a few months of constant listens, I became curious...

Can you give some background on how Free Moral Agents came together?
There was a time, before I put the record out, that I wasn't playing in Mars Volta anymore, and I had just bought a bunch of recording instruments. See, in my entire career, I'd always wanted to my own record but never had, so [Free Moral Agents] really started with just me. I knew J, who was actually my girlfriend at the time's brother-in-law, who did poetry and sang and stuff, so I got together with him. This is before the vinyl. I was working at this record store and started talking to my friend Jeff Harris, who it turns out, was really good with ProTools, so I added him to the group. He's really a producer and doesn't really play with us live, but he's very much responsible for the sound of the record. I knew Mendee [Ichikawa] for several years, and we had worked on and off, but I knew we needed a female element to the group, so that's basically what Free Moral Agents is right there. As far as the music goes, it started as my project, and I needed people to help get what was going on in my head...

YEAH, IT'S MY PET PROJECT, BUT THESE PEOPLE WHO I KNOW I CAN TRUST, REALLY BRING IT TOGETHER.

...and translate that to music?
Exactly. Their personalities and their talents all figure into the equation of Free Moral Agents, even though, yeah, it's my pet project, but these people who I know I can trust, really bring it together.

So where or how did you derive the name Free Moral Agents?
It's kind of a theological term. God created us all in free will, so we're all robots with free will... people who are lawyers and act like evil lawyers chose that path.

Interestingly, I found a reference to a 'free moral agent' on the web as a racial label remover - i.e. removing the label or stereotype off of someone invokes them to be equal, or, a 'free moral agent'.
Huh, I've never heard that. That's really interesting though.

There are some pretty abstract tracks on "Everybody's Favorite Weapon". How do write songs? What's the process?
Basically, I start with a break beat record and just kept putting in keyboard after keyboard until I was happy. When the audio is finished, J and/or Mendee come in with vocals, and then Jeff takes it and tunes the song up. I overdub the keyboard until I feel we have something that works.

Vocalists seem more like guests on the Free Moral Agents album. It feels like you could have gone ahead and inserted vocals into each track, but didn't. Why?
It might change in the future, but I don't see vocals as another instrument. I didn't set out to make a vocal record... sounds funny, but I didn't, which is different then most records. As far as this record is concerned, that's how it was meant to be.

Any news on De Facto? Will there be any more material released?
Well, since Jeremy (Michael Ward, who passed away) was so much a part of it, as far as playing live, I don't think we'll ever get play again. They were always recording, we always recorded every time we played, so there is material, but it's up to Omar. Maybe sometime in the future, they'll be another album with that material. It's up to him though.

Cool. Anything else you have going on?
I've been working with [DJ] Dangermouse, so that's a trip. Doing some stuff with Shapeshifters, Busdriver, hip hop that I love. Free Moral Agents have a bunch of shows coming up and we've got a new record that will hopefully be done by the end of the year.

The obligatory question: are you voting?
No, I don't think so.

Have you ever?
No, never. It's really actually tempting this year. I don't *not* vote because I don't care, I just don't follow politics close. You can call it pathetic, but I just don't see either of those choices as the solution. One's better then the other, don't get me wrong, which is why if I was ever going to vote, I would, but I just don't have...

...inspiration?
Not that, I just don't have really, any belief in our political process. Neither one of them will make things better. I think someone should really be informed when they vote, and I think a lot of people aren't informed when they vote. There are certain issues where I feel strongly saying yes or no to, but I haven't researched them enough to feel strongly enough to cast a vote for. People vote for stuff that sounds good on the surface, but then don't read the fine print.

2004 "Everybody's Favorite Weapon" (GSL)

by Sebastian Ulloa

As the saying goes, "If it sells in Peoria, it'll sell anywhere." Peoria Illinois was supposed to be the perfect cross section, the perfect example of "Average America". Though they formed in Peoria in 1997, Planes Mistaken for Stars perhaps didn't make the best fit as average Americans. They've since relocated to Denver Colorado, and have never stopped relentlessly touring the country. On and off the stage, they have been determined to give one hundred percent of their being to their music. They are a living, breathing, fucking, and fighting music machine. PMFS remains to be one of the most brutally honest, hardworking, and resolute bands out there. This year they wrote new material, and got a chance to road test it on the Plea for Peace tour. Immediately afterward they went right back out on the road to promote their new full length "Up in Them Guts" on their own. For singer Gared O'Donnell, becoming a father has not squelched any of the fire that fuels the band with such intensity. On the contrary, it has only served to fan the flames. Call it emo, screamo, post-hardcore... call it screamy-naked-beardcore. Whatever you call it, it's raw, real, and heartfelt emotion that is anything but average.

Some unknowing listeners may be put off when you stick your hand down your pants and say something like "This is another song about fucking." There's a lot of material in your music that if not explicitly, could be inferred as being sexual in nature. Like some of the titles, "Up in them guts," "Fuck with Fire," and "A Six Inch Valley"... Are the sexual references meant to be taken literally?

Gared (Chuckles) I've got a couple of answers for you. First of all, all of our imagery and titles...Yeah it definitely does have that connotation, and does sit in that context. The reason I feel that we picked that title for the record in general is because it's a double edged sword. If you can get past the sexual gratuity... if the people that know what it is and have heard that slang, once they can get past that, they can look at it to mean other things too. The whole record to me, the songs and lyrical content, really strikes a nerve in me. Some of the stuff I wrote, I wasn't necessarily comfortable writing and definitely not so comfortable singing. That's why I felt it should stick, because I'm challenging myself and we're challenging ourselves. Rock and roll is inherently a sexual beast, and I think that's missing a lot these days. A lot of people might look at us and say "what do they mean? It's a bunch of hairy ugly guys playing punk rock." To me, I think there are a lot of subtle overtones and undertones of sexuality in all of our music. Some of the times when I say "this song is about fucking," it is in a roundabout way. It's not necessarily about the act of, but a lot of it is about the emotional impact of our sexuality. It's a lot easier to say that on stage than it is to pull out a diagram and explain word for word what I mean. To me it is very sexual. The six inch valley thing... (Chuckles) I was wondering when somebody would pick up on that, but it's not a sexual reference at all. It's actually from a Bruce Springsteen song. {Laughter) I was wondering when somebody else would get as dirty as me, ha-ha. You won a blue ribbon brother.

How was your experience with the Plea for Peace tour?

The plea for peace tour was amazing. It was like a giant field trip because we're so close with Cursive. The crowds were kind of hit or miss. I think that on any tour that's a little bit bigger like that a lot of kids have it made up in their minds what they are there to see and that everything else is crap. I could tell that there were a lot of kids there that totally didn't get us, and just thought we were garbage. Whatever, they were there to see Cursive. I think it was a lot of Cursive's fans were the ones that were all "Ooh icky, Planes Mistaken for Stars sucks." I think they'd be surprised to know exactly what kind of people Cursive are, what they are into, and the approach that they are coming from. It was a beautiful tour. Mike Park is an amazing fellow. He's a beautiful guy for setting that up. Saul Williams is a stellar soul. And Cursive, obviously, they are blood. I couldn't have had a better time. It would have been nice if some of the crowds would have been a little bit more receptive to us. There were some shows that were a breath of fresh air where I felt like "wow, these kids are really here to see us and they're getting into it." It doesn't even have to be like that to be an enjoyable show. I think kids should at least give things a shot.

I tried to go see you guys in San Diego while you were on that tour. How was the crowd? I heard they were kind of shitty.

Yeah it was really pretty terrible. I think everybody was on par. Everyone performed really well. We tried to have fun. I mean, we had fun with each other on stage. The kids were just kind of like "impress me." I could have pulled a rabbit out of my fuckin' ass and none of those kids would have smiled. It was pretty ridiculous. San Diego, depending on where you play, seems like it has a lot of weird baggage going on. Some people have actually written us and said "Oh, don't play at this place." The problem was that it wasn't our tour. I can just suggest as much, but when shows have been set up for months and months it's really hard to pull out. It's one of those things too... It's kind of an uphill battle getting a show in San Diego anyhow. We've played the Che [Cafe] several times. Sometimes it's really been good to us, and other times it's been like "Oh wow, there's four kids here." It's a bummer man. I like the city. I have friends there, and it's a beautiful town. It just sucks that I never know what's going on. I mean, we could headline there tomorrow, and I really couldn't tell you whether there'd be 200 kids there, or 10.

How'd you get involved with the Black Flag tribute on Initial Records?

We're just friends with the Initial guys. They just called up and said "hey, you want to do this?" We said that it's a no brainer.

Yeah, but aside from the 12" you guys have your own 7". Why'd you record three songs as opposed to everyone else who recorded just one?

Actually I think we recorded four or five. What happened was I think they sent every band the same amount of money to record with. We've always been about getting the most for your money. So, when we went in and did that we recorded five songs. We did four Black Flag songs and one original, just to have as a demo for us. We actually recorded that song "Earning Ire" in the same session. Plus it was fun. It took us like two days, or rather two practices, to learn four or five Black Flag songs. We just went in and smoked through them. We did them all live and recorded five songs in like probably four or five hours. Since we had so many extra songs, they were like "Well, fuck, let's use them."

Is it a struggle just getting by from day to day when you are not on the road?

Absolutely, what little we can scrape together from touring definitely has to last us. There's not a whole lot of glory in it.

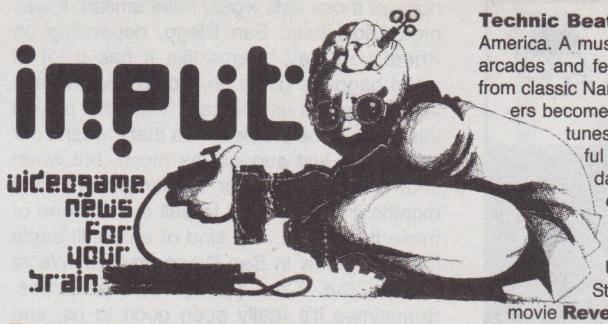
So, aside from being a father, is Planes pretty much a full time gig for you right now?

Yeah, I don't get paid, but it's definitely full time. Other than to my family and friends, I can't imagine devoting as much of myself or of anyone of us to anything else. It's pretty all encompassing, really.

How has becoming a father changed things for you and the band?

It's definitely rather trying. But at the same time in some senses it makes what I do easier, because I want to do it even better for him. I want to live even harder for him. Being a father makes a lot of things that you once cared about seem really frivolous and unnecessary. Then, it makes things that you really always cared about become a little bit clearer. It makes you focus a little bit better on what's really important. It's humbling to say the least.

www.pmfs.net



The big news at this point is that **Halo 2** is out. Does it rock? Don't know, it's actually not officially out we go to press, tho a PAL version was leaked onto the internet last week.

Gamestop has stopped taking preorders for the **Nintendo DS** handheld system, which effectively means that the company has sold out of its launch-day reserves. EB Games still has some, but they expect to run out of preorders as well. It will be out, if you have a preordered one, on November 21st.

Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly is on it's way to stores. The dragon platforming game features five playable characters with an array of new moves and powers. And the title is scripted by Simpsons and Futurama writer J. Stewart Burns. Defeat the Evil Red Dragon and foil his plan to capture the Dragon Realms with the help of a sackful of evil Dark Gems.

THQ announced that **WWE SmackDown! vs. RAW** has shipped to retail stores. The sixth installment of the WWE SmackDown! game series adds online play - a first for a wrestling game, as well as voice-over work by the actual actors... er, wrestlers. It also has a create-a-player-mode and the option for dirty or clean fights.

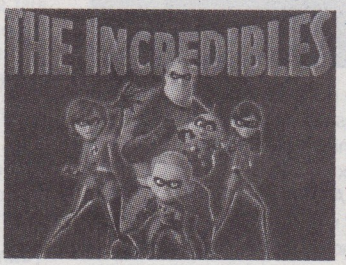
Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal has shipped to retail stores. The third installment of the series features the return of the two characters in their ongoing battle to stop Dr. Nefarious' plan to destroy all life in the galaxy. Captain Qwark returns to aid Ratchet and Clank through 29 locations across Planet Veldin. This latest edition of the series supports multiplayer action both on- and offline. Various game modes, including siege, capture the flag, and deathmatch, can be played by either four players offline or eight players.

An official statement on the recall of the Xbox version of **Street Fighter Anniversary Collection** (see this issue's review) has come from Capcom's offices in Osaka, Japan. Apparently it suffers from a music bug. His name is Adam Ant (wow, that was the lamest joke ever). Specifically, the stage background music for the character Hugo doesn't play correctly when the game is set to "Original" sound mode. Capcom has requested that anyone who purchased the game contact its customer support hotline. The company will exchange the "flawed" disc for the fixed version.

Lord of the Rings: The Third Age, EA's latest title based on J.R.R. Tolkien's epic trilogy has shipped for all current-generation consoles and the Game Boy Advance. It showcases new playable characters in a role-playing game that takes place throughout familiar locations (such as the Mines of Moria, the fallen city of Osgiliath, and Helm's Deep) that have never before been playable in a Lord of the Rings game.

Mastiff announced that its latest PlayStation 2 title **Technic Beat** has shipped to retail outlets across North America. A music/rhythm title with its origins in Japanese arcades and featuring a song lineup composed of tunes from classic Namco arcade games, Technic Beat lets players become musicians by altering the way the game's tunes are played. Players control one of a handful of different, quirky characters who are dancing on a colorful stage. As a bonus, you can learn the dance moves and use them to pick up girls.

Ubi Soft plans to publish a new handheld Star Wars game based on the forthcoming movie **Revenge of the Sith**. The game will be available for Sony's PSP, Nintendo DS and Game Boy Advance and will be launched in the spring to coincide with the release of the film. The game will "immerse players directly into the most compelling and memorable moments of the movie to produce the ultimate Jedi action experience."



The Incredibles, based on the new Pixar film, has shipped to retail stores nationwide. The game puts the player into the role of all four members of the Incredibles family, each of whom has his or her own special powers. Also released, **The Incredibles: When Danger Calls** for the PC/Mac offers younger gamers experiences of their own, with 10 levels full of minigames based on the film's characters, settings, and events. We played a few levels of The Incredibles while it was in still in developement, and it turned out to be pretty fun, so we'll defnitely be checking out the retail.

EA announced the release of **Ultima Online: Samurai Empire**, the latest expansion pack for the long-running PC massively multiplayer role-playing game. Gamers can now choose from two new professions: the samurai who possesses skills such as "honorable execution" and "lightning strike," and the ninja who uses stealth and has skills such as developing a whole genre of bad 80s films.

Majesco has shipped **Texas Hold 'Em** for the Game Boy Advance to retail stores nationwide. Developed by Skyworks Technologies, the game features a single-player mode that allows players to climb up the ranks of poker players, ultimately entering the Texas Hold 'Em championship in Las Vegas. Different variations of the game include 5/10 Limit Play, 25/50 Limit Play, Pot Limit, and No Limit--the last being the version made popular by various televised tournaments. Sadly, no annoying celebrities included.

The Legend of Zelda Four Swords Adventures is near completion. Nintendo announced that the official release date as of now is January 7. The game brings Link back into an adult realm, with environments much like that of LOTR, amazing graphics and harrowing gameplay.

Activision and id Software have revealed that the first official expansion pack for **Doom 3** will be called Resurrection of Evil. It will feature a new story as well as the double-barreled shotgun - or what id Software calls "one of the most classic weapons ever." The narrative is based around players possessing a timeless artifact that holds the powers of hell (seems a bit of a stretch for this genre, eh?)

We love Super Monkey Ball. It's one of those games that just fits perfectly with a drunken Saturday night...especially if it's Strip Monkey Ball. **Super Monkey Ball Deluxe** is now in the production phase. It will be a fusion of the original Gamecube Super Monkey Ball and its sequel with a further 46 brand new banana luvin' arenas to create this 300-stage monster. END

grand theft auto San Andreas

Players: 1
Reviewer: PR!
rockstargames.com/sanandreas/

As the fifth title in the Grand Theft Auto series continues to dominate the gaming world even before it's release (officially holds the title for fastest selling game, with over half a million units sold in two days), you may be wondering, is it worth it?

Yes, it is.

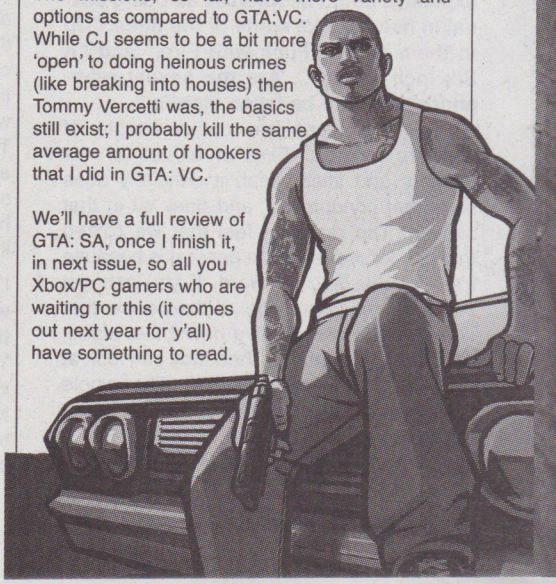
Even though I knew we had a copy on the way via the publisher (most publications, even the big guys, didnt get to review this game until it hit the shelves, uncommon except for the most anticipated games) I went out and bought a Playstation 2 and my own copy of Grand Theft Auto: San Andres. I am nerd.

GTA:SA is, at the basic level, a gang(sta) version of GTA: Vice City. Instead of being located in a Florida (*Scarface* style) city, you're in an urban, Los Angeles style setting (ala *Colors*). Instead of being the white ex-con Tommy Vercetti, dealing with the mob (like *Goodfellas*), you play the black Carl Johnson (CJ), dealing with gang bangers (refrencing films like *Boyz N The Hood).*

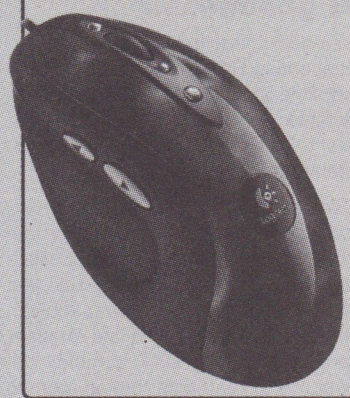
Deep inside the game, however, you'll see lots and lots of changes and improvments. A few examples: there is now more to your character then just a health meter - stamina, muscle, fat, sex appeal, respect, individual weapon skill, driving skills... it's much more open to character development and customization. I'm about 15% into the game, and while most of my levels are low, I've been working out at the gym when I can, so CJ can now take out most other people with just a few punches. Vehicles are now worth keeping, as you can upgrade parts and add nitrous and hydraulics to your ride.

The missions, so far, have more variety and options as compared to GTA:VC. While CJ seems to be a bit more 'open' to doing heinous crimes (like breaking into houses) then Tommy Vercetti was, the basics still exist; I probably kill the same average amount of hookers that I did in GTA: VC.

We'll have a full review of GTA: SA, once I finish it, in next issue, so all you Xbox/PC gamers who are waiting for this (it comes out next year for y'all) have something to read.



Logitech MX510



Platform: PC
Web: logitech.com
Being big FPS dorks, it's always easy to blame something else on why you suck. Use the MX510, and you can pretty much rule out the mouse as your problem. This is as accurate as mice can get, and because of the quick response, it improves our game around 5-10%. That doesnt sound like much, but any hardcore gamer knows that it's a huge increase. This is a must buy.

HARDWEAR REVIEWS

Logitech 2.4ghz Wireless Controller

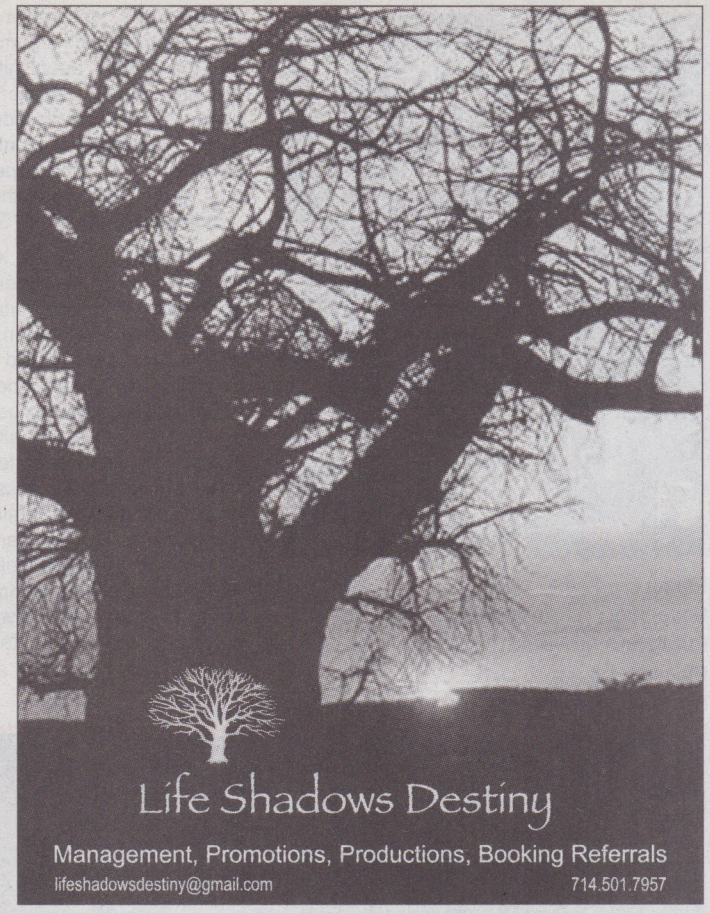
Platform: Xbox
Web: logitech.com
Out of the six controller styles we've tried (large/small Microsoft and four third party models) this is by far the best. It's got a heavy sturdiness, fits well in your hand and has the best wireless range.

Intec 2.4 ghz Wireless Controller Mini

Platform: Xbox
Web: inteclink.com
This is basically a smaller version of Intec's normal controller, appearing to be for smaller hands but actually works with big hands to. Good for the price, and runs for 60hours on two AA's.

Lik Sang SmartJoy FRAG

Platform: PS2/Xbox
Web: lik-sang.com
Would you like to fucking DOMINATE console titles, both single player and online? Go to Lik Sang's website and order this. It takes a while to send from Japan (we had to actually buy this instead of receiving it for review) but you will own everyone else online... assuming you're already good at playing games on the PC, of course. See, the SmartJoy FRAG is an adapter for your Xbox or PS2, allowing you to connect any (non-usb) mouse and keyboard to your console. How important is this? Check out the forums on Lik-Sang - they're full of console gamers protesting this adapter's release as unfair and demanding that they cease production. That's how important this is.



Platform: Xbox
Developer: Raven Software
Publisher: Activision
Players: 1-4
Reviewer: Davros

Bringing the well-known comic book team to video game format has previously been hit or miss (mostly miss). X-Men Legends scores a win with its combination of Street-Fighter button combos and special powers with the experience gaining type story progression that has been the groundwork for most RPG's.

Those familiar with the X-Men universe will be familiar with the general story backdrop of good mutants vs bad mutants vs all of mankind. Based out of the X-Men Mansion, you accomplish missions with up to a four-man X-team. As you progress, team members gain experience which can be spent to boost certain disciplines and powers, making them all the more ass-kicking. X-Traction points in each level allows swapping of team members as different missions are best accomplished by utilizing the different fighting techniques each mutant possesses. But since the game doesn't 'demand' certain characters, you'll find yourself sticking to a basic four as once you've invested into getting a character powerful, it makes no sense to swap them out with a less powerful one. Small design flaw there, as all characters don't get their fair screen time.

A button mashing fighter gets a shot of RPG goodness.

The graphics are standard fare with some exceptionally rendered cut scenes. Rendering the characters in a cell shaded style against the regular destructable environments was an original touch and makes it easier to distiguish between characters. Which is often hard because of...

Camera angles. They are awkward and clunky (top down, angled top down distant and angle top down close). It's impossible to see down the hallway or street so you are forced to deal with whatever you can get on the screen. That's fine for standard turn-based RPG combat, but when it's real time button combo fighting, a better view of the playing field is necessary.

But aside from the blatant bad choice in camera work, the game play is involved (rpg) and addicting (combat), even with the standard (yawn) story line.

Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone

Platform: PS2
Developer: Stormfront Studios
Publisher: Atari
Players: Single
Reviewer: Michael N. Shear

Feeling uncomfortably like the bastard child of Lord of the Rings: Two Towers, and the Baldur's Gate universe, Demon Stone is the dungeon crawler you've played a million times before.

The game plunks you right in the middle of a small battle, where the resident long-haired sissyboy hero is saving a caravan, beset by marauders. In his crusade, he frees a spiky-haired elf who is LITERALLY the female version of LOTR's Legolas- from her "sassy" comments, to her dual daggers...weak. He also saves a nancing wizard, and thus the textbook "hero triumvirate" is formed. Wait a minute: warrior, elf and wizard. Am I playing Gauntlet!?

Though the graphics seem to be a direct emulation of the LOTR series (and since the creators also helmed LOTR: Two Towers), smaller nuances make the game fun, although somewhat dated. Changing/upgrading your character's armor results in a visual change in your player (IE changing from fabric to plate mail gives your character an updated look). And upgrading weapons with elemental charges (IE, lightning) physically alter the look of your weapon, much like Champions of Norrath.

However, as good looking as it is, this game is also a fan of the "swarm" mentality - dazzling you with a stunning background, then filling it with the same, cookie-cutter monsters 50 times over. That's right: just like Gauntlet, you run around and kill things until a new area opens. Then you run to that area, kill things, and go to the next. Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

But the storyline IS decent, and makes it easier to justify killing the same enemies, over and over. The game is narrated by Patrick Stewart, and features the voice talent of Michael Clarke Duncan, among others. And for once, the dialogue isn't written (or voiced) tritely, and truly drives the story forward.

Overall, this is a fun game, and will seem groundbreaking to play (if you've never played the LOTR/Baldur's Gate series).

Shadow Hearts: Covenant

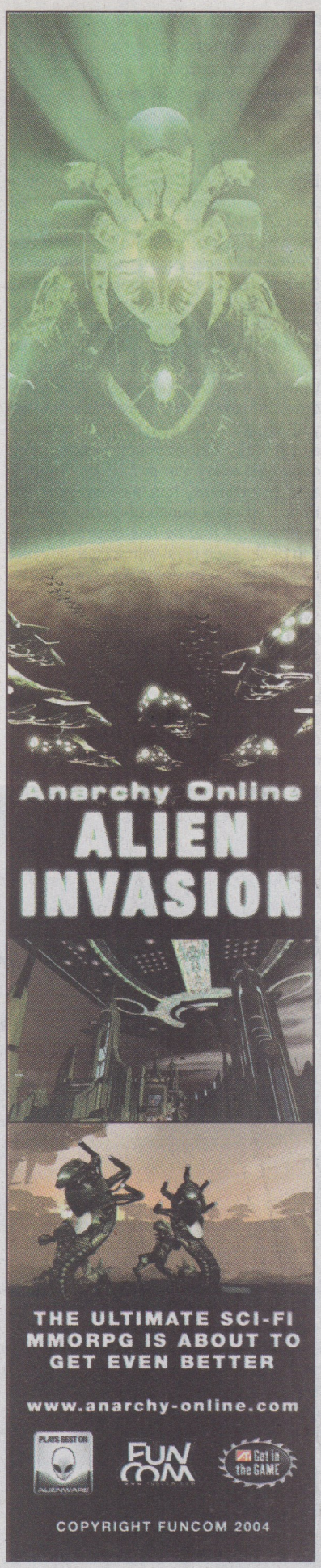
Publisher: Midway
Platform: PS2
Players: 1
Developer: Aruze
Reviewer: Michael Shear

What does mixing jaw-dropping, Squaresoft-caliber CGI with droll, dated in-game graphics get you? Midway's latest foray into the world of RPG's. Why does a non-niche title come out, that has inexcusable in-game graphics? Eepecially from Midway, who have wowed us with MK:Deception, The Suffering and Psi-Ops in 2004 alone. The graphics seem more suited to a late era PS1 title (or a mid-era Dreamcast title), and are simply inexcusable. For example, there is no definition between enemies - if you are fighting 4 zombies, they are all completely identical. Boring and lame.

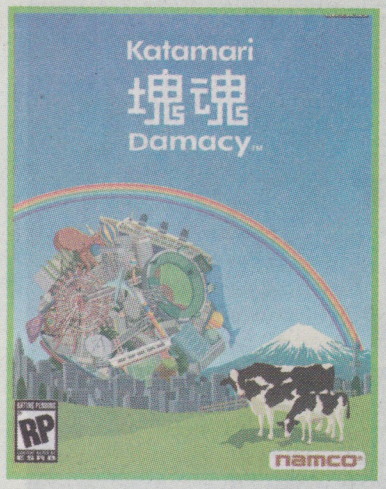
Through surprisingly stunning CGI sequences, we learn that the year is 1915, a half-year into WWI. Karin Koenig leads a march into the small city of Domremy, in northern France. And as with most Japanese titles, almost all of the characters are Japanese (in outward appearance). To a gamer who has never dealt with import games, Karin's appearance will completely befuddle them (at best!). You see, she's a cute, skinny redhead...and oh yeah, she's Japanese. The guy she takes up with (Nicolai) in Vatican City, yeah- he's Japanese too. In fact, it seems that in this world, 90% of the population is Japanese...their nationalities only indicated by stereotypical costume. For example, Karin sports a giant, gloss Iron Cross (apparently, so that we don't forget she's supposed to be German). Do they assume that we as gamers are so retarded, that we can't even keep track of plot-sensitive characters?

Likewise, the audio is excellently mastered (and probably has the only RPG soundtrack I'd ever consider buying), and fits the game extremely well. The voice acting (in CGI-sequences) is top notch, and really gives you a feel for the mood, and lends an excellent sense of immersion.

Without giving too much away, the story has more hooks than a fishing derby, and enough plot-twists to keep even the most jaded sci-fi fan riveted. The motley band of characters are oftentimes crude and hilarious in their exchanges, and serve the storyline well. If you're a big fan of anime/Japanese RPG's, you'll find a lot to like in this (provided the graphics don't make you climb the walls).



Platform: PS2
Developer: Namco
Publisher: Namco
Players: Single/Multiplayer
Reviewer: Brian Greenaway

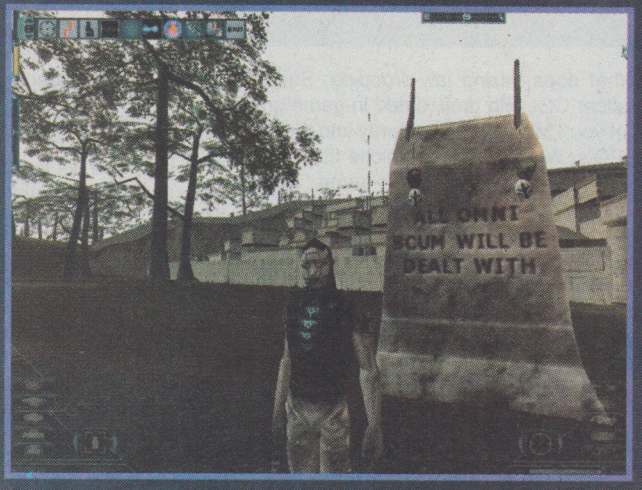


Every game is a rip-off of every other game. If there had never been Pitfall, Kung-Fu, Wolfenstein or Dragon Warrior, there would be no video games today. Except for Katamari Damacy. Katamari Damacy is like no game you've ever played. You don't use the buttons, you don't shoot anything, you don't try to get money, experience points, or the girl. You'd think, based on all of this, that you wouldn't have any fun either. Well, you'd be wrong and you're lucky I'm here to set you straight. The King of the Cosmos, in a fit of self-destructiveness, has destroyed every star in the sky. Then, in a fit of laziness, has elected you, The Prince, to roll a bunch of matter together to negate all that he has destroyed. So, you begin each level with a little, tiny ball, and using the analog sticks, roll around picking up bigger and bigger objects until eventually you're picking up dogs, people, cars, baseball stadiums, airplanes, etc. You with me so far? The beauty of the game lies in not only the simplistic, beautiful graphics, but also in the physics, as each object you adhere to affects the momentum and handling of the ball. And don't even think about trying to pick up objects that are bigger than your ball; you'll bounce right off those MFers, losing valuable bits of matter in the process. Addictive, inventive, and original, Katamari Damacy is a must-play.

Anarchy Online

Platform: PC
Developer: FunCom
Publisher: FunCom
Players: Massive Online Multiplayer
Reviewer: Mary Wistrom

The Newbie Days - Part 1 of 3



A futuristic, sci-fi based MMORPG beginning in the year 28702 when the Omni-Tek Corporation lands on, and begins colonization of planet Rubi-ka. After decades of unrest, clans of workers begin to rise up against the Omni-Tek Corporation. A war now rages between the 2 factions. Who will you side with?

You begin your adventure in Morning Star space station. Choose your breed, appearance, and profession and name. Then off to the ICC shuttle port, where you can head to the surface of Rubi-ka, or the sky city of Jobe (if you have the Shadowlands expansion) Either path leads to a newbie area, the place to learn game play basics, and menu navigation, as well as, gain some experience, loot, and money to get you started on your way. Decision time again, Omni, Clan, or Neutral? Whatever choice, the game play starts out the same. Warp to your home city, get an apartment, do some shopping, or just start exploring, killing, and looting. You can solo, or team with other players and get missions and start leveling up.

There is variety of weapons, guns, grenades, swords, you name it. Sorry, wizard wannabes, no spells, instead you run nano (computer) programs, offensive, defensive, and healing.

The world of Rubi-ka is massive, with a variety of beautiful environments to explore. The Shadowlands expansion adds the sky city of Jobe and enormous world of the Shadowlands (plus the apartments in Jobe are sweet).
Until next time, happy adventuring.

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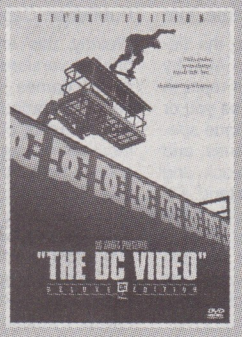

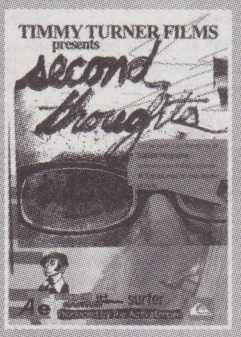

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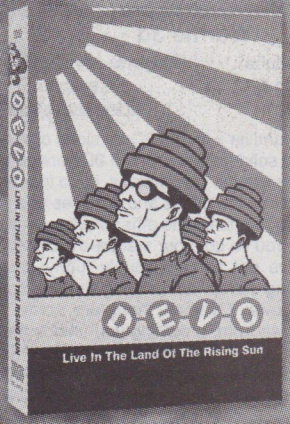

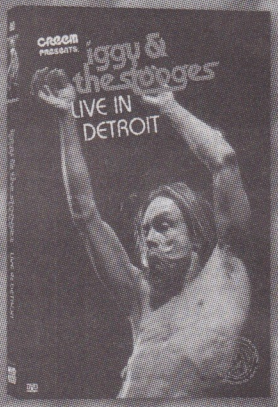

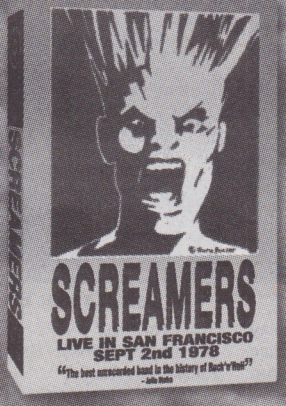

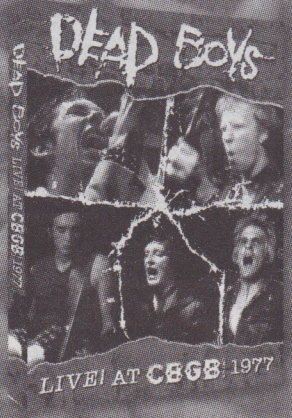

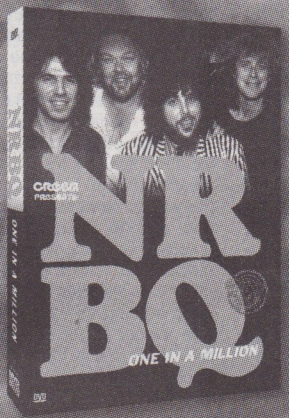

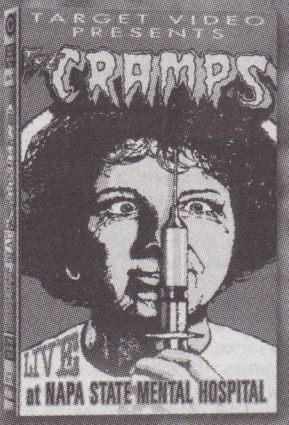

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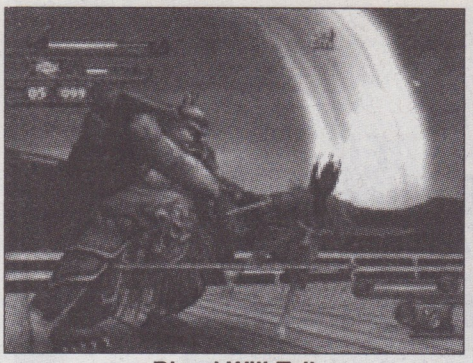


Blood Will Tell

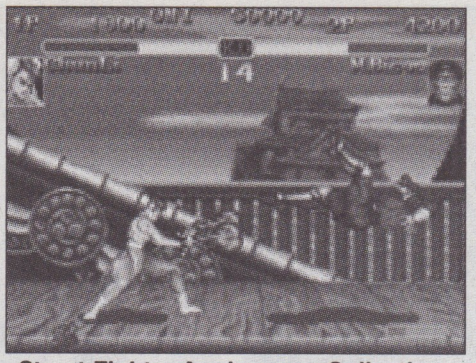
Platform: PS2 **Players:** 1
Developer: Red, Wow **Reviewer:** Josh Drake
Publisher: Sega **www.sega.com.com**

Blood Will Tell is a 3rd person, action packed sword slasher that benefits greatly from "Dororo," the rich 1969 amine storyline it's based on. Betrayed at birth, our infant hero, Hyakkimaru, had 48 body parts removed by demon "Fiends" and then surgically replaced by some old man, who additionally installed swords and cannons within the prosthetic limbs to help the "child of light" slay evil and reclaim his much-less-cool organic components. The 48 Fiend bosses are all wildly varied in shape, size and attack patterns, never seeming to want for more flavorful design. Plus, they all attack in strict old-school patterns, which is how I like 'em. The bulk of the game, however, consists of redundant hacking and slashing marred by a lousy camera that tends to focus anywhere but the action. Thankfully there is a charge attack that cues Slash Mode, a Parappa-style button tap flurry. Not only does it break up the monotony, it also require some degree of skill. BWT throws in some platform/puzzle levels featuring Hyakki's annoying sidekick, Dororo, but they have the same camera woes and contribute absolutely nothing. Somehow though, Hyakkimaru's badass sword arms make up the difference.

Fable

Platform: Xbox **Players:** 1
Developer: Lionhead Studios **Reviewer:** Fuego
Publisher: Microsoft **www.fablegame.com**

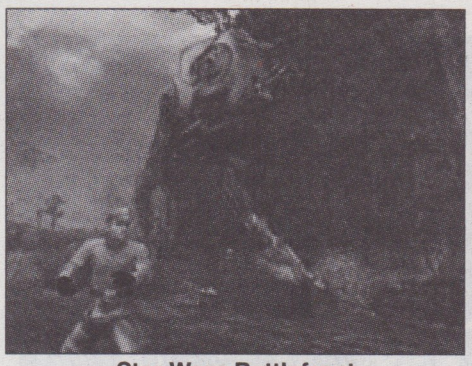
The look of Fable is amazing; detailed villages, the life-like baddies and NPCs, the lush scenery. The AI is by far some of the best for a console; NPCs will react to you based on your renown and look, and praise you or shy away as you walk by. The amount of dialogue specific to your actions are too numerous to discuss, and sometimes extremely clever. Baddies will block and parry, really giving you a fight. They don't stand still when you're near, they attack. Beyond that, in what other game can you corner a beer wench in a bar, fart on her, belch in her face, bitch slap her, then woo the girl next to her and have sex with her. And throw up from drinking, break into people's houses, pickpocket, pick fights with any villager or trader, buy houses, marry multiple wives, tattoo yourself and kill anyone you want. The quests are fairly easy (20 hours for me) and the supposed Moral Alignment doesn't do much: even if you're a cold-blooded evil killer, it has little affect on the game other than to scar your face. Almost the best RPG of the 2004, but not quite.



Street Fighter Anniversary Collection

Platform: PS2 **Players:** 1-2 + Xbox Live
Developer: Capcom **Reviewer:** Fuego
Publisher: Capcom **www.capcom.com**

Weirdly, this anniversary edition doesn't contain the original versions of the games. It doesn't even contain all the games, just numbers 2 and 3. And they have been "upgraded" so to speak, by more or less combining elements of various Street Fighters together. The most interesting thing about the sound is that you can choose from different Street Fighter soundtracks, which is a nice little touch. Overall, there's not much to say about the Street Fighter series that hasn't already been said. It was a part of our youth (well, mine anyway...I'm old) and it still holds up, to me, as the greatest 2d fighter out there. I preferred 3 over 2, but both will give you flashbacks. Lastly, it comes with a Street Fighter 2 movie. I watched it for about a half an hour. I was not enthused.



Star Wars Battlefront

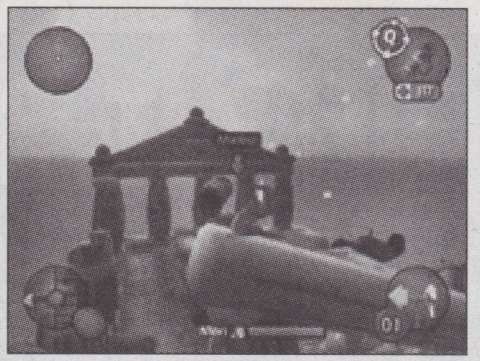
Platform: GBA **Players:** 1-2 + with multiplay
Developer: Lucas Arts **Reviewer:** R. Thomas
Publisher: Lucas Arts **www.lucasarts.com**

What you've got is a 3rd person shooter that revolves around battles set on mostly familiar Star Wars locations. The game automatically chooses your side-Imperial for the first few battles, then the Rebellion for the last few. I guess this is so good triumphs over evil at the end of the game. But it would have been nice to stop the rebels from blowing up the death star. Anyway. Players can either run around and shoot melee style, or jump into a number of different vehicles such as speeder bikes, AT-ATs, tauntauns, X Wings, etc. The single player campaigns consist of original trilogy battles and prequel battles, on worlds such as Naboo, Hoth, Tatooine, Kamino, and a few new ones made up for the game. Unfortunately you can't mix the time periods, so no battle droids on Endor, or stormtroopers on Geonosis. Winning a battle is done two ways, by capturing all the enemy spawn points or killing all the enemies-whichever comes first. Multiplier is similar to the Battlefield games. Choose a spawn point, run to the battle, kill whoever you can, die, respawn, repeat until objective achieved. Again, because it's Star Wars, it's somewhat fun, but by no means original.

Test Drive: Eve of Destruction

Platform: PS2 **Players:** 1 + Multiplayer
Developer: Monster Games **Reviewer:** R. Thomas
Publisher: Atari **www.atari.com**

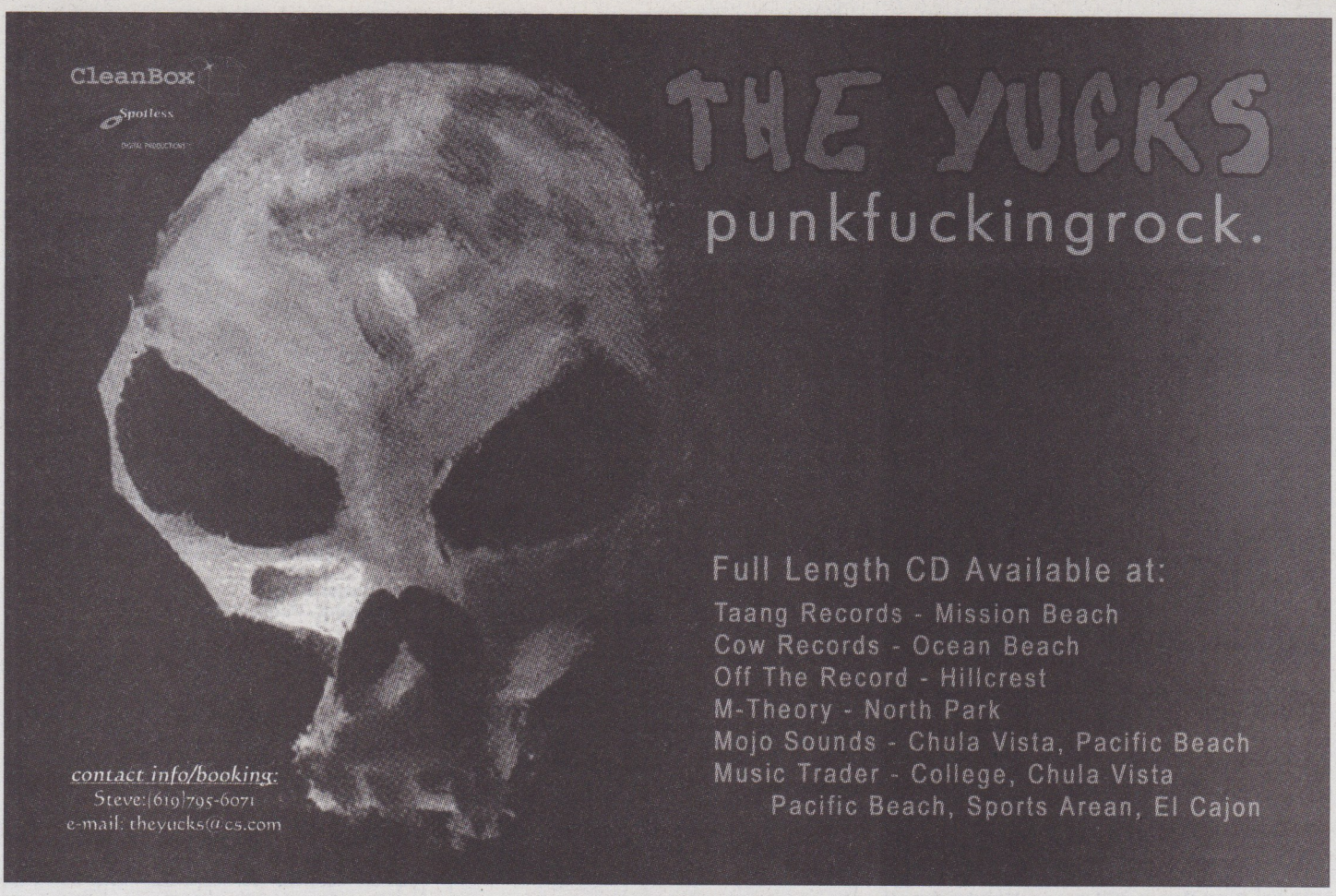
If you're a good ol' boy, this game is probably going to find a place in you heart. While the driving mechanics are slow and broad, making sharp turns very difficult to pull off without hitting the wall, the game throws enough car crunching variety at you to satiate your highway bloodlust. The single player mission, as you'd expect, involves winning races, demolition derbys, jump contests and other such competitions. Placing high will yield money, which can be used to buy newer cars; like weapons in an RPG, some are light and fast, some heavy and slow, but you can buy as many as you want and change them for particular races. Wining also unlocks new cars, which can be used in the multiplayer mode. The upside to the campaign is that wrecking other cars rewards you money, so even if you lose the race, as long as you "smash em up" you can still win. The single player is okay; the multiplayer mini games are where it's at. Red rover, chicken racing (racing in opposite directions around a circular track), missile battles and even car soccer. Not bad at all.

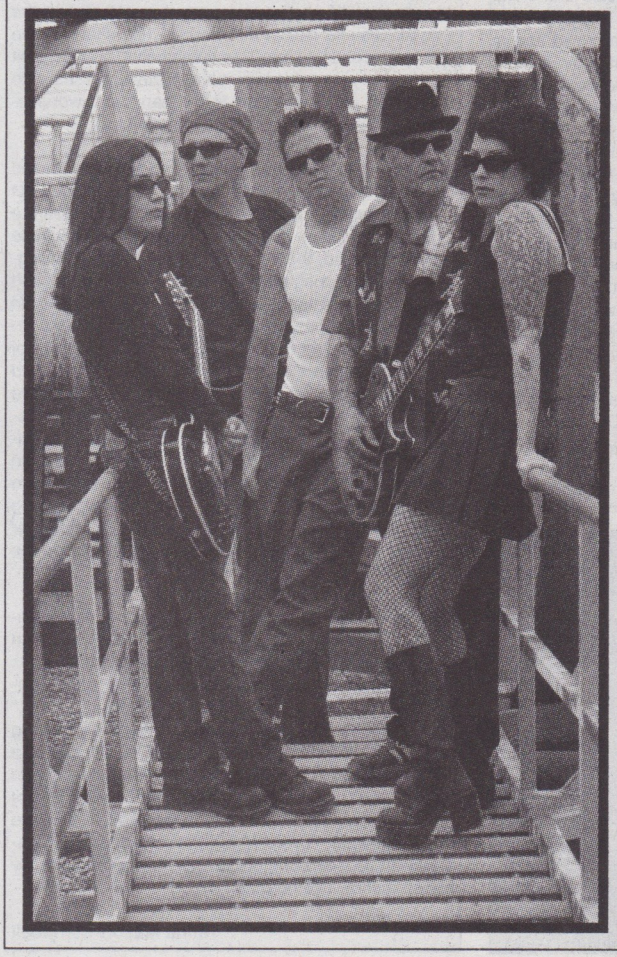


Worms 3d

Platform: Gamecube **Players:** 1-4, multi for PC
Developer: Team 17 **Reviewer:** Fuego
Publisher: Acclaim **www.worms3d.com**

You're probably familiar with the 2D versions of Worms, which were good solid games, but the 3D version takes the cake. Setup is like the old versions, up to four teams of worms nestled into the nooks and crannies of a word, with each player trying to kill the other player with a variety of weapons. You've got your standard bazooka and nades, but you've got some insanely funny ones as well, such as flying sheep, devastating banana bombs, and exploding cows. Over all there are some thirty weapons to choose from, providing you unlock them in the single player game. The single player game is like the VS battles, with the exception there are objectives to achieve beyond destroying the enemy, such as collecting certain packages, or completing jetpack missions. But VS is certainly the meat of the game. Each world is surrounded by water, so knocking your opponent into the drink is the best way to kill him, though whittling away his health with guns and bombs works too. The Gamecube version is not online (PC version is) but if you and your buddies are looking for a good multiplayer game, Worms 3D is it.





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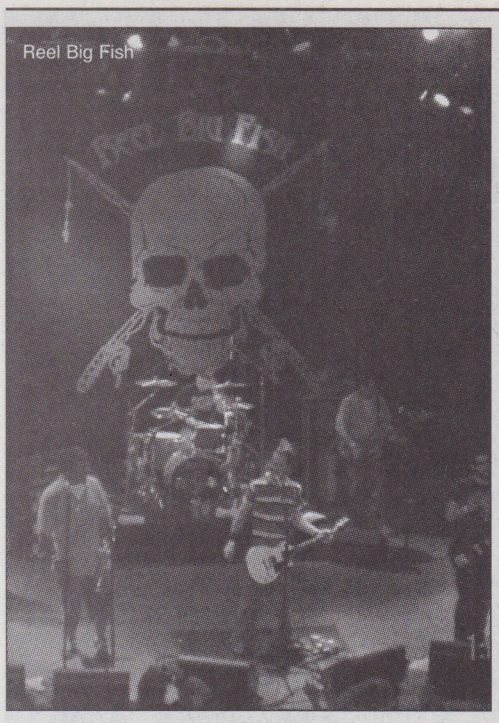

Reel Big Fish

Catch 22 – RX Bandits – Reel Big Fish and others
@ House of Blues - Anaheim, CA

By the time I stumbled into Downtown Disney's House of Blues in Anaheim late on a Sunday evening, I was in no shape to be doing much of anything, never mind reviewing a show. It was a long weekend of partying hard while attending the Red Sox vs. Angels series. Catch 22, The RX bandits, Reel Big Fish and a few other notable Ska/punk performers hit the stage in a weekend long Coast to Coast Roast tour; I was catching the second show.

The show started around 5:30 according to the ticket stub, while my arrival time was estimated at 7:15 pm; I had to hit up ESPN Sports Zone to catch some 21 plus camaraderie prior to attending the all-ages event. Funny thing about all-ages events, stupid fucking 16-year old bitches, I was not in the mood to deal with that, but being the trooper that I am I held strong.

In any case, Catch 22 caught my attention during the second-half of their set, foreshadowing the high-energy rush that followed in the latter portion of the show with headliners Reel Big Fish. Their melodic and rhythmic power made the crowd wet (literally, sweat was pouring everywhere) with anticipation. These Jersey boys totally rocked out, putting to shame the ensuing RX Bandits performance.

RX Bandits tore it up with an eclectic set that I witnessed from the upper balcony while catching my breath since I felt like I was on my deathbed. By this time, mosh-pits and bouncing heads consumed the scorching hot lower level of the sold-out, standing-room only show. By the time Reel Big Fish hit the stage around 10 pm I was ready to keel over, but instead I turned on my camera, snapped a photo of these Ska Legends and headed to the stage.

After bumping into a million sweltering, moving people, I got to my destination up front. I was getting a second wind as I fired up the Digi for some close-up shots. To my dismay the fucking battery was dead, now clarifying exactly why you only see one photo, yes only one photo, of Reel Big Fish accompanying this write-up. Yeah, I know that I'm a fucking pothead retard. Regardless, the show rocked. There's a reason why RBF recently won the Outstanding World Beat/Ska Album Honors at the California Music Awards. This being the first time I caught them live, I was impressed with their ability to rock the crowd with their classic tunes and newer hits. Rock on RBF!

Melanie

Rye Coalition

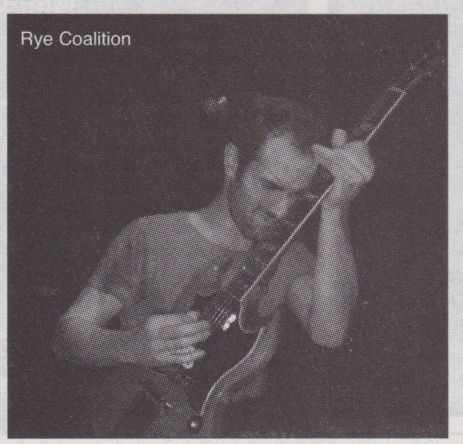
Rye Coalition - The Kinison
@ Maxwell's - Hoboken, NJ

Originally this bill was supposed to feature two pretty popular bands, one being Buddyhead Recording artists Your Enemies Friends, and the other, Epitaph rock darlings, Division of Laura Lee. Both however ended up canceling but luckily the two remaining acts rocked hard and the timing allowed for some delicious Oktoberfest style dining...

The Kinison, who hail from Chicago and bring the rock in a way very reminiscent to that of At the Drive In, and who's recent release "What Are You Listening To" (Atlantic) has landed them on the Warped Tour and upcoming tours with Death Cab For Cutie, brought a spastic and flamboyant brand of discortant and surprisingly aggressive rock... I would definitely put them on the list of bands to see again.

Headlining the night were Jersey locals and now, Interscope Recording artists, the mighty Rye Coalition. Playing to their hometown crowd and a very packed Maxwell's, the Coalition proved from the first riff, as they usually do, that we were in for a demonstration and education on just what pure rock fury is. Vocalist Ralph Cuseglio lead the band on a 45minute tour de rock as his antics landed him all over the stage and, eventually, in a sweat covered tantrum through the crowd. Driven by the machine-like drumming of Dave Leto, Justin Borey's mind-boggling basslines, and insane guitars any AC/DC fan would be proud of thanks to Vincent Vincent and Herb Wiley V (who ended the night on the shoulders of a very dedicated fan from Florida who had been w/ them for the past few nights), the assault was non-stop and extremely crowd pleasing. Look out for the upcoming Rye Coalition record due out hopefully by early '05... Dave Grohl produced this bitch so you know it's something serious! Oh, and do not EVER miss seeing this band live... EVER!

Derek Meier


Rye Coalition

Scissor Sistors

The Scissor Sisters
@ Roseland - Portland, OR

September 25th- The Scissor Sisters retouched the Roseland for their second Portland appearance in two months. With charm to spare, flamboyant front man Jake Shears and icon-worthy Ana Matronic held their ground amid fevered reaction on behalf of those in attendance. With each song, the pairs' synchronized boogying was enthusiastically matched (beat for beat) by the audience.

Masquerading on to the stage like a more highly stylized version of the Village People, the group opened their set with "Take Your Mama Out." Taken from their self-titled disc, which has spun its way up to number one on the UK charts, this current single retains the Scissor Sister's typical disco vibe while sharing time with an acoustic guitar. This combination hints at a bit of a country sound which pleased the masses who seemed to admiringly look to the band as if worshipping at an alter through out the evening.

Throughout the evening, Shears and Matronic played off each other while putting together a scandalous act for all to enjoy. The pair often divided to separate sides of the stage in an effort to conquer the whole crowd. Even so, the dynamic duo reconnected at regular intervals during each song to engage in duets and fun sexually-themed theatrics. The night included an audience wide dedication of "Happy Birthday" to Shears' cousin, as well as an audience wide salute of the middle finger to a disgruntled spectator who had originally flipped off Shears. Dancing lessons were doled out by Matronic showing how one can successfully dance while seated (directed at those in the balcony). Matronic used her beaming mother as an example before she herself took a seat onstage in order to provide a better visual. Continually critiquing and referencing the crowd to an extent like no other band before, it seemed that any energetic silhouette insight was rewarded by the band.

The show drew an extremely varied audience, comprised of seven year olds, hipsters, parents, urban cowboys, drag queens, and those decked out in ties and sweaters. Dominating the set were such highlights as the down tempo reflection of "Mary," "Laura," and "Magnifique," as well as the attention grabbing cover of "Comfortably Numb." "Music" easily stole the show however. The encore began with a drag queen crawling on to the stage, soon followed by legions of other audience members who hopped up for their time in the spotlight. Dressed to the nines and accompanied with floor-shaking disco rock, the sextet certainly put on a show like no other.

Nilina Mason-Campbell

SuicideGirls More than just a bunch of naked punk women.

By Jason Schreurs

Anyone who's surfed to suicidegirls.com (and there are many of us) knows the website's main attraction: Naked punk ladies! What most people don't know, until they buy their $4 a month membership, is that the popular site has features such as journal hosting, discussion groups, employment listings, newswires, and interviews with bands and celebrities. Another more important thing people don't realize is that founder Missy Suicide had a message in mind when she started the site, one of female self-empowerment and challenging the status quo.

"I think that women have gained equality on so many different levels, but as far as being able to discuss sex, it's still a major taboo for females to discuss their likes and dislikes openly," explains Missy. "And sex is such an intrinsic part of being human, much less female, and it's a fun part of being a woman [laughs] that it's not something I feel women should be repressed about. I think that if all women felt good about their bodies and were comfortable with their bodies, the world would be a much better place and women's rights would grow by leaps and bounds."

It could be this strong message that would explain why 52 percent of the website's subscribers are women. "I think there are several reasons," says Missy. "The easiest to recognize is that there aren't very many places where alternative, tattooed, pierced women can go and see what's new in fashion and style, and the Suicide Girls are definitely beacons for that. In their photo sets they are wearing stuff that is easily attainable, like $20, $30, $40 pieces, that women can go out and find and afford."

Currently hosting the photos and journals of 340 women (and growing every day), the site lets visitors get a personal glimpse at women who are willing to share not just their bodies, but also their emotions.

"Most erotic or nude images are created in this very stereotypical male fantasy way where the women are not looking at the camera, they're not connecting to anybody. In our photos they are very much present and they are sharing a bit of themselves as opposed to being passive subjects. They are very active. They are sharing a bit of their personality in every photo set, and are able to express themselves in their own words in their journals."

Other than being passed off as just another porn site, SuicideGirls has also taken a lot of heat from within the punk/hardcore scene. Regular complaints include not paying the girls enough for their time, and asking the models to sign exclusive contracts.

First, the pay: "It's almost twice as much as anybody else pays so it really amazes me that people are criticizing that," says Missy. "And it's less graphic content. We're really good to the girls, we always increase their pay. As soon as the site starts to make more money, we pay the girls more money for their photo sets. It's not a popularity contest; each girl is paid the exact same for every set that is turned in because every girl has something different and unique to offer."

As for the exclusives: "They can model other places, but there are a few places we ask that they don't model, basically just competition sites, but other than that they can model for whomever they like."

Pearl Orchid, a woman who models on the site, not only finds the experience empowering but also explains that the girls are never asked to do anything they don't feel comfortable with, a rarity in the naked model world.

"We are 100 percent in control of what we are doing," says Pearl, "we get to choose what we do in our photo sets and in our journals, and big part of that is the license to be as crazy and as punk and as freakazoid as I want to be, you know?"

Pearl is one of seven women currently touring the US and Canada on the SuicideGirls Live Burlesque show. The girls have also been joined by Missy on select dates to promote a new SuicideGirls coffee table book.

"The live show's been amazing," gushes Missy. "I was just with them in New York and Boston and the crowd response was incredible; they really loved the show. And the opening bands are great on this tour as well." By the way, the opening bands include the amazing Pilot to Gunner (see their article in this issue), The Moony Suzuki, Bloom (returning from the last SG burlesque tour), Dearlings (from Australia), Sluts of Trust, Grand Royal, and more.

The live show features the seven women in various states of undress as they perform skits that include a Bond girls send-up and an "erotic version" of the infamous ear scene in "Reservoir Dogs." Now that I'd like to see. Add to the mix enough chocolate sauce and whipping cream to cover seven shimmering, partially nude bodies, and it's bound to be a night you'll never forget.

"It's a lot of skits and skin," says Missy. "The show takes the sexy spirit of burlesque and puts it to a modern soundtrack. It's like no other show out there. If you don't want to get messy, you should stay out of the front row."

Fun and games aside, it must be a bit difficult for seven women to be crammed into a passenger van for two months as they make a stop in a new city every day. So the obvious question looms: Any catfights?

"There have definitely been some challenging moments for each of us," laughs Pearl. "We are seven very unique, strongly opinionated women, but I'm learning a lot from these girls. We come from different backgrounds and experiences that we are drawing on to come together to do this."

And that is the overwhelming theme to the empire that Missy has built. Women, bonding together, open about their sexuality, feeling good about themselves, and having a load of fun in the process. Whether we are around to stare at them on the computer, or in the audience watching their Live Burlesque show, it doesn't seem to matter. Sure, our participation can make it more fun, but they enjoy doing it either way.

suicidegirls.com

411 Video Magazine

"Skateboarding Issue 64"

(411 Productions)

411 is starting to have themed issues. This is the Brazil issue. It is hosted by the perennial Brazilian ambassador, Bob Burnquist. Ever wonder what happened to that Brazilian kid, Rodrigo Tx. He won a bunch of contests and was getting mad coverage, then just sort of disappeared. According to his 'day in the life of' article, he's back in Brazil, and still ripping. The profile of Og de Souza (yeah the guy with the little legs who skates with his hands) is jaw dropping. There's a solid showing by all of the Brazilian superstars including "Frogface" Fabrizio Santos, Carlos de Andrade, Lincoln Ueda, and Nilton Neves, as well as a whole slew of rising stars. All the bonus material that they keep tossing into the newer 411's is getting more and more overwhelming. It's a lot to sit through, but there is still some awesome skating in the video, and like three Jets to Brazil songs.

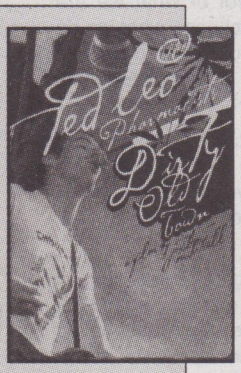
www.411VM.com

Sebastian U.

Ted Leo & the Pharmacists

"Dirty Old Town"

(Plexifilm)



This documentary is a perfect first time experience for virgins to the band, featuring a decent sampling of their discography including "Dirty Old Town," "Biomusicology," Flight," and "Parallel or Together." The DVD primarily delves into the lives of the band members and their journey to Coney Island for the 3rd Annual Siren Music Festival, focusing mainly on front man Ted Leo. Producer Justin Mitchell does a stand-up job with cinematography, using continuity editing to weave interview clips and audience footage throughout the unrefined performance. And performing is the band's specialty, as they pointed out they hardly ever practice since they're always on the road. Keeping it around the one-hour mark earns Mitchell some extra points, because no matter how good Ted Leo and his newest solo project are, an hour film about them hour is definitely plenty.

www.tedleo.com

Melanie

Various Artists

"From Los Angeles: The First Waltz"

(Trampoline)

Featuring singer/songwriter types such as Phil Cody, Pete Yorn, Mavis and more, The First Waltz is beautifully shot but amusing at best. It's certainly not the be-all, end-all of DVDs in this genre. As each artist performs at what appears to be a strong crowd, they are subtle and heartfelt in recreating their epic documents of whatever the hell it is these shoegazing types like to write about. But unfortunately, because they prefer to graze around their microphones instead of work off the audience's energy, you feel like you're watching the musical equivalent of The Grass Growing Network. Factor in that each performance is interrupted with quips and short interviews with various participants/label-types and you really don't know what the hell's going on. Nice try, but it's time for another shot.

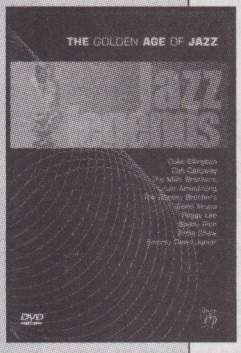
www.trampolinerecords.com

Keith Carman

Various Artists

"The Golden Age of Jazz"

(Quantum Leap)



All the masters of jazz are assembled here like old women in church. The heart of this DVD sits with the clips showing Sammy Davis Jr. singing "Boogie Woogie Piggie" with his crazy eyes going every way possible. Louis Armstrong gives a great version of "That's Why They Call me Shine." He is draped in a leopard print outfit and standing waist deep in foamy bubbles, but neither of those hinder his gravely voice and buttery trumpet from running mad circles around anyone within ear shot. Duke Ellington swoons through "Stormy Weather" without much excitement, but loads of inspiration for any upcoming jazz fan. Every performer on this DVD is amazing and gives anyone patient enough to watch the whole thing an idea of where the current sounds in music came from. While mainstream American music and jazz are not on the same road, early jazz had a major impact on every genre of music today. The DVD runs a little long and I feel little like I am back in seventh grade and watching a video so that the teacher can take a nap, but the fast forward button works wonders. Skip through the boring parts and be sure to check out Sammy Davis Jr.'s bug eyes. I'm seriously going to have nightmares.

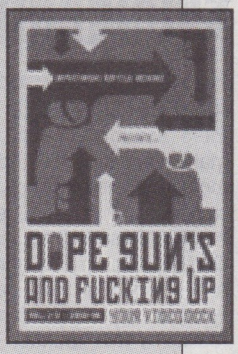
www.qleap.co.uk

Pete Soyer

Various Artists

"Dope Guns and Fucking Up Your Video Deck Vol. 1-3 1990-94"

(MVD)



Defining the Minneapolis/Midwest noise rock scene of the late 80's and early 90's, Amphetamine Reptile Records released some of the loudest and most ambitious music of the time. They label started by releasing 7" singles in a series called "Dope, Guns and Fucking In The Streets". On this DVD, they captured many of their roster on film. While a few are college video class masterpieces, most are collages of live footage and whatever effects the period could muster on minimal budgets. The quality is in the quantity. 27 bands are represented. Here's a dose: Helmet, Chokebore, Cows, God Bullies, Gnomes of Zurich, Guzzard, Hammerhead, Melvins, Servotron, Tar, Today is the Day and Unsane among others. While the rest of the world was foaming over Pearl Jam and Nirvana, AmRep was crushing the underground with overblown distortion and cranked out tempos. There was a reason why the label felt compelled to write "Noise" in big capital letters behind its Amphetamine Reptile logos. Find out why here. If you have any taste whatsoever, I promise you'll find a couple bands here you missed and wished you hadn't. And as a twisted bonus, this is capably hosted by "Dr.Sphincter" (Rich Kronfeld of "Let's Bowl" fame). If not for the early Helmet, then for the full nudity of Lubricated Goat.

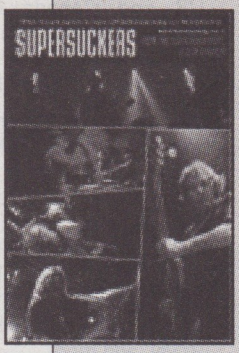
www.musicvideodistributors.com

Bushman

Supersuckers

"Live In Anaheim"

(MVD)



Supersuckers = rock and roll. It's too bad this band has never hit with 'mainstream' success. Or maybe that's a good thing. Keeps this shit pure. This band is oiled from years on the road. Hard drinking, hard smoking, hard loving years on the road. When 3 out of the first 5 songs have the word 'rock' in the song titles, it's gonna rock. Australia has AC/DC, America has the Supersuckers. Yeah, they are that fucking good and shame on you for questioning me. Either you know this fact or you like N'Sync. There is no middle ground here. While the DVD is bare-bones (basically 17 very rocking tunes live from Anaheim), the sound is pristine and the energy of live Supersuckers is captured in all its rocking glory. And while the DVD itself is shy in extra features (an interview and an Eddie acoustic performance at Amoeba Records), the package itself comes with an additional audio CD of a live performance of a show in San Diego when the band was in acoustified country mode (a few of the songs on the DVD are actually from such a setting). Long live rock. Long live the Supersuckers.

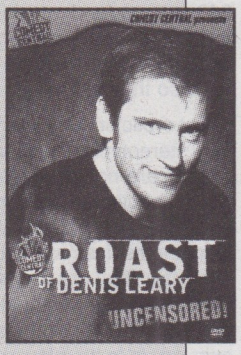
www.musicvideodistributors.com

Bushman

Dennis Leary

"Roast of Denis Leary - Uncensored"

(Comedy Central)



When exactly was Dennis Leary relevant, and what happened since then? That's the basic theme of this 'roast', which places Leary in the hot seat while first, second and even third rate comedians bash him with a quick standup session. This show was originally aired on Comedy Central; the DVD contains all those uncensored moments you missed and, well, weren't really good for airing anyways. Rental at best.

www.comedycentral.com

PR!

Dee Dee Ramone

"Hey is Dee Dee Home"

(Extinkt)

In 1992, Dee Dee Ramone met with Lech Kowalski so that Dee Dee could contribute a filmed story to Born to Lose. In this footage Dee Dee tells the camera several stories, often using his own tattoos as a departure point. Tales of drugs, violence and the birth of New York punk flow from one to the other as Dee Dee talks and Lech films. The focus on Dee Dee as a revelatory talking head is very successful here, shades of Errol Morris (Fog of War, A Brief History of Time). Johnny Thunders performing "Chinese Rock" is included as a bonus, along with some behind-the-scenes footage. This is part of Lech's vision of a series of films on the founding of punk, to be called Born Losers.

www.musicvideodistributors.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

TV Watcher...>

Dog The Bounty Hunter
A&E

Filmed in a combination cops / reality style, the show follows Dog Chapman and his literal family of bounty hunters around their home turf of Hawaii. "I'm a lawman on a mission from God against Felons." Says Chapman, who owns Da Kine Bail Bonds. Looking like an ageing rocker and claiming his own checkered past (he served jail time), he does exhibit the street smarts his occupation demands. Although most shows revolve around the capturing of a criminal, the build up is usually more dramatic than the actual take down. Rarely is there anything more than a surprised look on their bounty's face and some trash talk from the bounty crew. That's not to say there isn't a sense of danger involved. Just watch office manager and wife Beth when she gets mad at the Dog. Which seems to happen about once per show.

Video Mods
MTV2

This is not cool. But when something is this creepy awful, it needs to be mentioned. Some genius at MTV thought it would be a 'hip' idea to take semi-recognizable video game characters and sync them up with disposable pop music in order to make the video game characters 'jam' like it was their song and video. While it catches ones eye in that 'what the fuck?' sort of way, the cheese factor soon chokes out any sense good taste. This is just a way to get a little more mileage (and money) out of products that sponsor MTV. The only thing more painful than watching this show, is seeing Headbanger's Ball host (and Hatebreed singer) Jamey Jasta have to include bumpers for it in his show and act like it's in any way cool.

LOST
ABC

Abandoning the 'reality' of having people stranded on an island, ABC opted to go back to producing entertaining television. About people being stranded on an island. But rather than competing for a million dollars, these survivors just want to make it out alive. The one hour, weekly drama starts immediately after a plane went down in the tropics, stranding a couple dozen survivors on a remote island. But the island itself is holding secrets (both dangerous and beneficial) that affect each person in unpredictable ways. The direction is superb as the crash and personal stories preceding this dramatic event are revealed in each episode. Sometimes, the revelations cross, taking previous threads of storyline in new directions. The bit of star power (August Hill from OZ and Charlie from Party of 5) is re-enforced by the masterful unveiling of the story. And with a sense that the most truly bizarre and dangerous events are yet to unfold, you can still pick up the storyline. But this is best viewed from episode one.

Naked Science
National Geographic

Ok, the NG channel is a pretty easy call all around, but the series "Naked Science" in exceptionally worthy. Dissecting a particular subject or phenomena, the tempo of the show finds a great middle ground between heady scientific fact for the intellectual, and cool graphics and simple explanations to make the burnouts feel like they are learning something. The Stonehenge piece in particular shed some new facts on the previously well-documented location. Doing what a good educational show should, informs as well as entertains.

Top5's

5ugge5tion5 from the MF mu5ic 5taff.

Bushman

Lamb of God "Ashes of the Wake" (Sony)
- A new breed of metal
Gonga "Self-Titled" (Tee Pee)
- Bow down before Black Sabbath
Skinny Puppy "Greater Wrong of the Right" (Hunter)
- Less abrasive puppy fucks pop
Dry Kill Logic "The Dead And Dreaming" (Repossession)
- Nu-metal raises the bar
Taking Pictures "Friends Are Ghosts" (My Pal God)
- indie rock for mice modest

Brian Greenaway

Bright Eyes "Fevers and Mirrors" (Saddle Creek)
- Songs you wish you wrote
Jimmy Eat World "Futures" (Interscope)
- Destructive, searing...on the radio
Various "Future Soundtrack for America" (Barsuk)
- Unreleased, rare, live, B-sides, etc.
Cat Stevens "Greatest Hits" (A&M Records)
- Terrorist watch list my ass
My Chemical Romance "Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge" (Warner)
- Good but not quite great

James Wright

Hopesfall "A Types" (Trustkill)
- Melodic hardcore with gigantic grooves
Papa Roach "Getting Away with Murder" (Geffen)
- Big Hooks and big choruses
Alexisonfire "Watch Out" (Equal Vision)
- Better than your mom's ass
Him "And Love Said No" (Geffen)
- Love metal for heavy headbangers
Green Day "American Idiot" (Warner)
- A Perfect punk rock opera

Jason Schreurs

Lamb of God "Ashes of the Wake" (Epic)
- Best metal album in decades
Green Day "American Idiot" (Reprise)
- I'm as surprised as you
Rise Against "Siren Song of the Counter Culture" (Geffen)
- Heavy hardcore at its best
Submission Hold "What Holds Back the Elephant" (G7)
- Proto-art-punk rallying cry
The Blood Brothers "Crimes" (V2)
- Another ingenius, freaked demento blast

John Adams

Converge "You Fail Me" (Epitaph)
- Ferments nicely in your stereo
The Hostage Heart "Where There is Despair, Hope" (Five Point)
- A new level of ferocity
Full Blown Chaos "Wake the Demons" (Stillborn)
- Tough as nails hardcore onslaught
Chevelle "This Type of Thinking Could Do Us In" (Epic)
- A rare radio rock gem
Ludacris "Word of Mouf" (Def Jam South)
- Humor, Ho's, and flawless flow

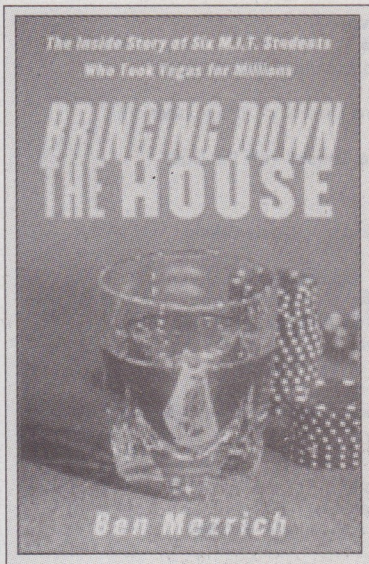
Sebastian Ulloa

Elliott Smith "From a Basement On a Hill" (Anti)
- Left us at his best
Good Life "Album of the Year" (Saddle Creek)
- Kasher can't stop kicking ass
Moving Units "Dangerous Dreams" (Rx)
- Dance Dance, not really revolution
Death From Above 1979 "You're a Woman I'm a Machine" (Vice)
- They've got freaking elephant faces
Cobra Kai "Complete Recordings" (Chiaroscuro)
- Impossible acquisition. Hardcore done right

Pete Soyer

Elliott Smith "From a Basement on the Hill" (Anti)
- Who isn't listening to this?
Interpol "Antics" (Matador)
- The happiest album since Morrissey
Sufjan Stevens "Greetings From Michigan..." (Sounds Familyre)
- Banjos can be beautiful to
Keane "Hopes and Fears" (Interscope)
- My brit pop soft spot
The Nation "George W." (United States Electoral College)
- What the fuck just happened?

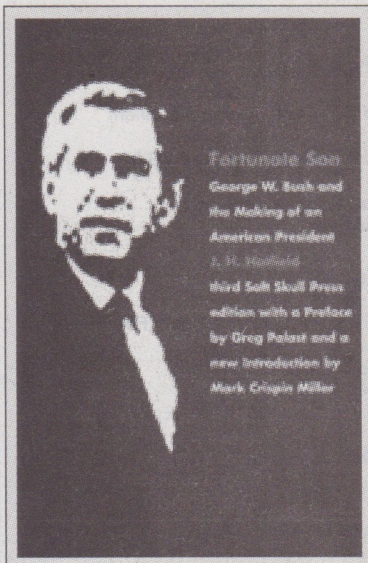
Read More



Ben Mezrich
"Bringing Down the House"
(Free Press / Simon & Schuster)

Everyone knows not to mess with Vegas, but goddamn if this book won't make you want to try. Riveting and entertaining, "Bringing Down the House" chronicles the story of M.I.T. genius Kevin Taylor (or whatever his real name might be) and his cronies, as they take Vegas (and countless other casinos) for millions. Sure, there are the card counting tricks that you'll remember from every gambling movie ever made, close escapes from casino security, tales of smuggling chips/cash through airports, etc. The real drama here comes from Mezrich's crisp prose and the ever-changing dynamics amongst the group. The M.I.T. group had card counting down to a science, with intricate, choreographed dynamics between various members of the team. Casinos are good about keeping their money inside and are lightening quick to kick those to the curb they suspect of counting cards. Kevin and the rest, under the tutelage and financial backing of a group of shady East Coast investors employ ingenious schemes to keep their squad operating all weekend without the Casinos ever catching on. Of course, like Biggie said, mo' money, mo' problems, and the increasing profits turn members against each other as power struggles emerge, rival groups appear at casinos, and the mounting lies begin to unravel relationships. A must read.
www.simonsays.com

Brian Greenaway



J.H. Hatfield
"Fortunate Son"
(Soft Skull)

James Hatfield knows how to hold his tongue. Fortunate Son reads almost like a text book, giving a step by step look at our buffoon president from womb to war-mongerer and astonishingly enough, without the use of biased language and personal attacks (at least not from the author). I don't know how Hatfield was able to record so many shady business dealings and vile campaign tactics without using at least a couple of expletives. This enormous repression of emotion probably helps explain why Hatfield killed himself in a hotel room a couple of years ago. Public records supply the greater amount of knowledge on Bush's business fiascos, campaign mudslinging and illegal stock activity, however the most controversial information (cocaine usage, shady business ties, his unlikely acceptance into the National Guard) is claimed to have come from three confidential sources close in business and family to the Bush family. According to the documentary "Horns and Halos" (another Soft Skull project detailing the making of Fortunate Son) the source names were released when Bush declared his intention to run for president. The Bush administration brushed aside Hatfield as a felon with a checkered past and the media being as partisan as it is, followed suit. All in all, I stand by the textbook comparison; there were no humorous interjections, no interesting author's notes or colorful conspiracy theories, there was no lightening of the dark mood at all. Fortunate Son is a biography, sans the typical fluff and hand jobs, of our country's most infamous thief.
www.softskull.com

Rebecca Martin

The White Stripes
"Morphing the Blues"
(Chrome Dreams)

Usually the allure of unauthorized rock 'n' roll band biographies is the sex and drugs part of the equation. This tome focuses on Jack White of the alt-blues duo and while he may say, "I'm Finding It Harder to be a Gentleman", Gentleman Jack has left no such titillating muck for British journalist Martin Roach to rake. Roach subtitles his book "And The Strange Relevance of Detroit". Indeed, as one living in greater Detroit, I say it must be strange to a Brit who while offering a spectrum of sources such as guitarist Mick Collins (The Dirtbombs, The Gories), producer Jim Diamond and Johnny Szymanski (The Hentchmen) largely offers the views of Neil Yee and Gary Graff to put Detroit and The White Stripes in perspective. Thus he dips deeply from eddies at the source of the river (Yee ran seminal club The Gold Dollar where bands like The White Stripes played for 50 or less fans) to the muddy confluence at the end (Graff is founding editor of MusicHound Rock and yaks it up with FM jocks on air). In the end we get the context that gave birth to The White Stripes as if explained by visiting aliens trying to understand it all. Still, this is an interesting read with complete overviews, often track by track, of the albums. The indexed book with official and bootleg discographies makes for a good reference on The White Stripes although it may not be particularly illuminating without the participation of the private and reclusive pair. Be prepared for such proofreading lapses in this breezy account as the Black Sabbath guitarist referred to as "Tommy Lommi" and The Flaming Lips simply as "Flaming". Roach does go far to explain if not ponder much of the group's symbolism and the equivocal, guarded relationship between Meg and Jack White.
www.chromedreams.co.uk

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Zach Hill and Holy Smokes
"Masculine Drugs / Destroying Yourself is too Accessible" (Cd/Book)
(TNI Books / Suicide Squeeze)

Zach Hill is the percussive madman behind Hella, Team Sleep, Nervous Cop, and Crime in Choir. Now he's written a book with a CD to go along with it. This thing reads like he wrote it without nouns and then had them randomly generated by computer. It's like a giant Madlib. As far as I can understand it's a creation story. It details how the birth of the planets and reality came about. In the story the main characters (Rules, Die, and the Purple Tooth, the Grasswarriors, and The Knights) battle and eventually sacrifice themselves to become the eyes, brain, heart, bones, glands, and nerves of a singular existence. The whole thing is very surreal. There are illustrations by Hill for every page, each of which contains 1-4 sentences. They just look like doodles with a calligraphy pen. They are so nonsensical, and there are so many of them, that they become easy to ignore. Zach Hill and Holy Smokes is made up of, among others, Carson McWhitter (The Advantage), Rob Crow (Pinback), and Jonathan Hischke (Flying Luttenbachers). The resulting collaboration is as equally unconventional and weird as the book. There is all kinds of different instrumentation and weird effects. The only consistent element throughout the 50 minutes of "music" is Hills signature brand of inhumanly frantic drumming. Highlights come on songs like "Getting in the Head of your Galaxy" and "Mountains in Your Chest," when it seems like Rob Crowe's influence (and voice) can be heard the strongest. Most of the music is saturated with reverb and other effects. It's like what the popping of hot grease would sound like if you dropped something unsuspecting in. The book is interesting and somewhat difficult to follow, but a very quick read. The CD is longer than it would take to read the book, but just as mind numbing. I think if you pay attention too closely to either, you will lose your fucking mind. To quote the book, "any hairless cat covered in sea urchins could tell you that."

Sebastian U.

Michael Bolton says:

"Find out if you are gay!" - http://tinyurl.com/22u2j

Over Two Million Units Sold Of "Chappelle's Show" To Date Compared To "The Simpsons" 1.9 Million. "Chappelle's Show: Season Two Uncensored" DVD Release Date Slated For Tuesday, February 8, 2005.

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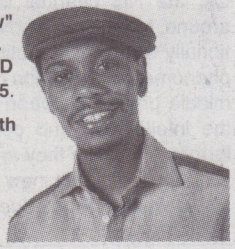

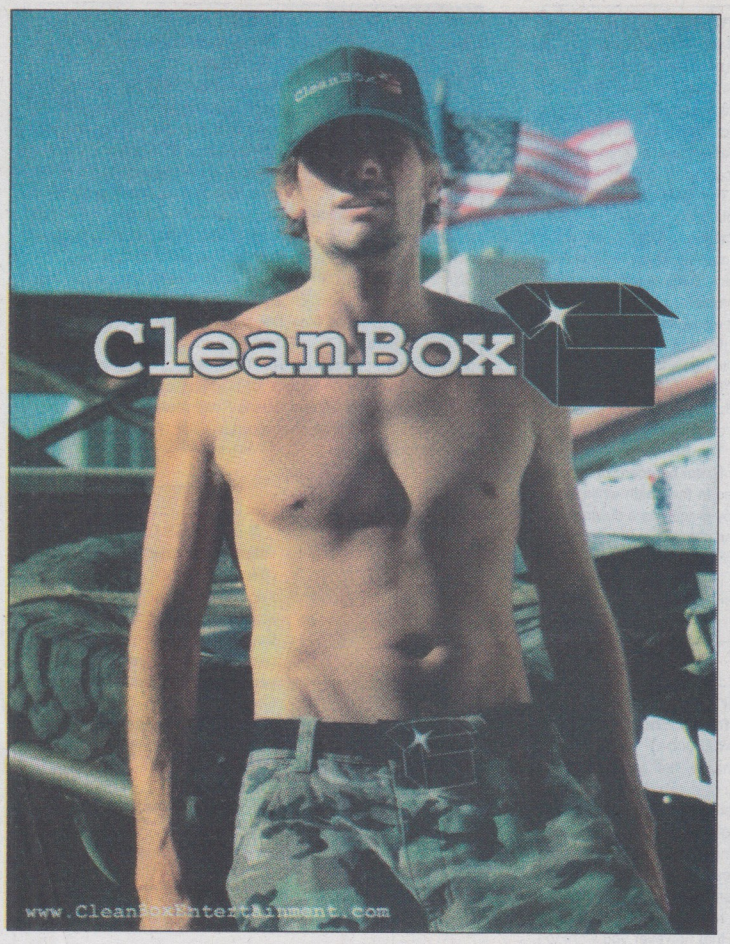

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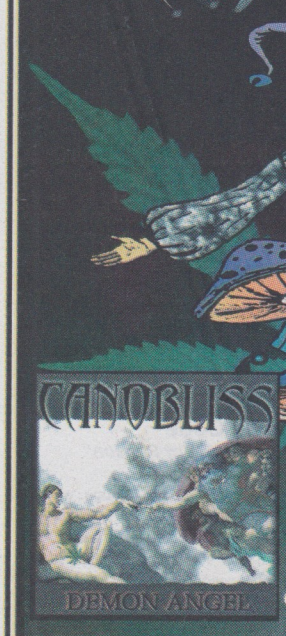

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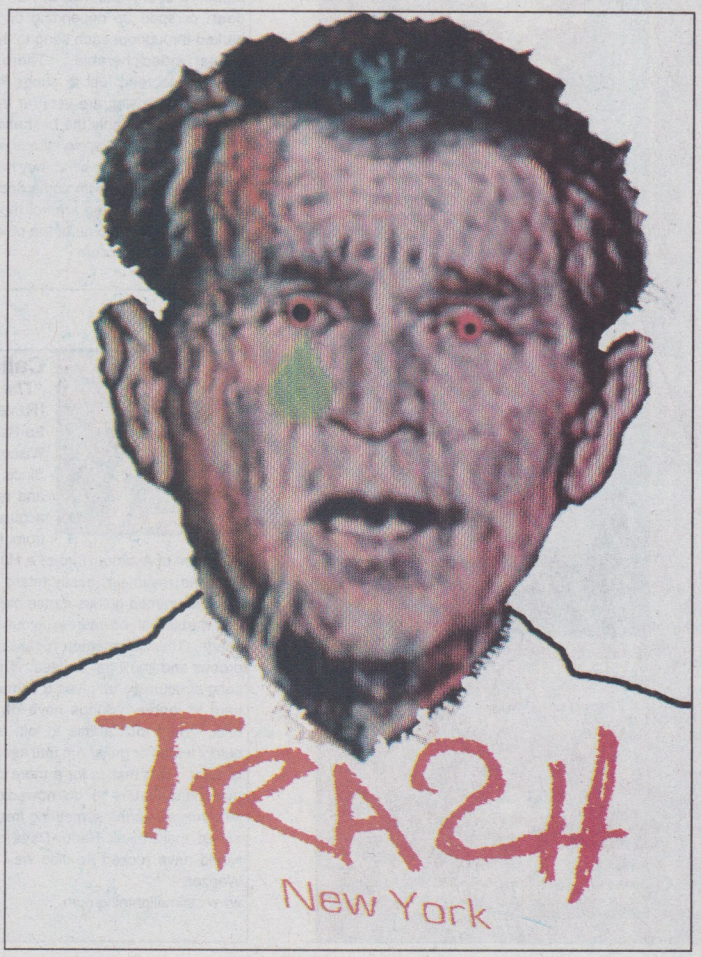

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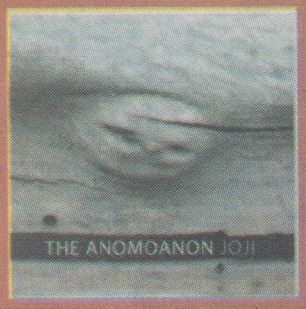

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the temporary residence ltd.
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The Banner
"Your Murder Mixtape"
(Blackout / Brightside)

The Banner beat me to the punch. I would have described this album as the perfect listening material for stalking, killing and skinning prey. But by calling it "Your Murder Mixtape", The Banner took the fun out of all the witty anecdotes I was planning on making. So I guess I'll have to talk about their music. They open with "Zombie Onslaught", which is about a man's love for his woman. He loves her so much he brings her back to life as a zombie and pretty much dooms the world. But zombie or not, this guy is in love. "Those light green eyes, those pale white thighs," sounds like the description of an angel, even if she is an angel that will eat your brain. Every song is an ode to all things scary, bloody or bound with duct tape. Two lines in "Black Duct Tape" sum up the feelings of The Banner: "You'd think with all the shit she talked she'd be a better fighter. You'd think with all the blood she lost, the body would be lighter." The Banner is out to get anyone who opposes them. This homicidal hardcore unit from New Jersey is leaving a wake of blood in their path while fans of horror movies flock to any stage they grace. As a disclaimer: Modern Fix does not endorse the killing of anyone, unless there is a really good reason. If there is a really good reason, don't tell the cops we endorsed it.
www.thebannernj.com

Pete Soyer

Undying
"At History's End"
(One Day Savior)

With a name like Undying, you know you're not going to get mellow somber music. It's becoming increasingly hard to separate the sheer amount of metal/hardcore bands these days as they're starting to inbreed. This CD is hard to differentiate between a bunch of different bands. At times Undying remind me of a more talented version of the band Kittie; take that however you want to interpret it. The guitars are competent but can sound very repetitive at times almost as if it was the same riff but slowed down or sped up depending on the song. The vocals are barked throughout each song to the point where the words are almost indecipherable. There is obviously a bit of a Slayer/Hatebreed feel to songs like "Teratisms", the problem being that Undying are very far from the brilliance of either of those acts. Probably the best effort on this outing is the song "By Turns" with it's catchy riffage and brutal attack; download it and see if you're into what they're doing. Don't get me wrong, this is a solid effort with some decent songs but the fact of the matter is that Undying are not memorable enough to compete with the quality of some of the other records being released.
www.onedaysavior.com

James Wright

Call Me Lightning
"The Trouble We Are In"
(Revelation)

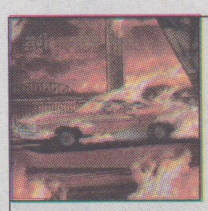
So Revelation seems to be mining Wisconsin for their recent signings. Since by Man hails from Madison and now one of the labels newer acquisitions is Call Me Lightning from Milwaukee. Formed by ex-members of Akarso, Hero of a Hundred Fights and Haymarket Riot, the resume is easily heard in the end result. Scratchy quick strummed guitars dance behind pleading, breathy vocals that warble with an interesting out-of-control (and barely in tune) charm. Think Minutemen vocal acrobatics with a jagged Fugazi groove and you'll get an idea. There is an erratic approach to song structures that gives a complexity to this indie rock that's hard to ignore. Songs have diversity and most importantly, rock. They rock a little to left, meaning, there is a constant quirky tempo or guitar run that keeps the listener off guard. This is good. This makes for a more original sound. Do you know how hard that is to do nowadays? It takes a band from Milwaukee to bring something fresh to the indie rock table. Go ahead, make all the Happy Days jokes you want, but these guys would have rocked Arnolds way more than those pussies in Weezer.
www.callmelightning.com

Bushman

Mos Def
"The New Danger"
(Geffen)

It's too bad that this album isn't very good. Mos Def has his moments for sure... "Sex Love and Money" is a SICK track (flute and all) and is reminiscent of the power that Mos Def is capable of, but it turns out that his main weapon is actually rap rock. The first moments of an album aren't supposed to be like this, yet here we are, forced to begin "The New Danger" with 2nd rate Limp Bizkit tracks like "Freaky Black Greetings" and then "Zimzallabim", both which are downright awful and will surely disgust the average Mos Def fan. Are there good tracks on here? For sure... "Close Edge" (you may remember this song from his performance on The Chappelle show) has a boring beat but is a good showcase for Mos Def's lyrical abilities, and tracks like "Sunshine" and "Life is Real" makes this album worthy of listens, but man, that rap rock (like "War") really makes my stomach hurt.

PR!



The Glasspack
"Bridgeburner"
(Small Stone)

I am wearing a shirt right now that says, "World's Greatest Grandpa" that I got for 99 cents. 'Where does one get killer deals like that?' you're probably asking yourself. Omaha. Besides having Shelley Novak (world's cutest girl), Omaha also has the world's best thrift stores. If that doesn't sound like the world's perfectest vacation, I don't know what does. "Bridgeburner" would make a nice addition to those wonderful thrift stores in South Omaha (where I barfed from eating sushi), because it is quite possibly the world's sludgiest rock album, fit only to gather dust on a dark rack between Steppenwolf 8-tracks and some Barry Manilow LPs.
www.theglasspack.com

Brian Greenaway

Age of Silence
"Acceleration"
(The End)

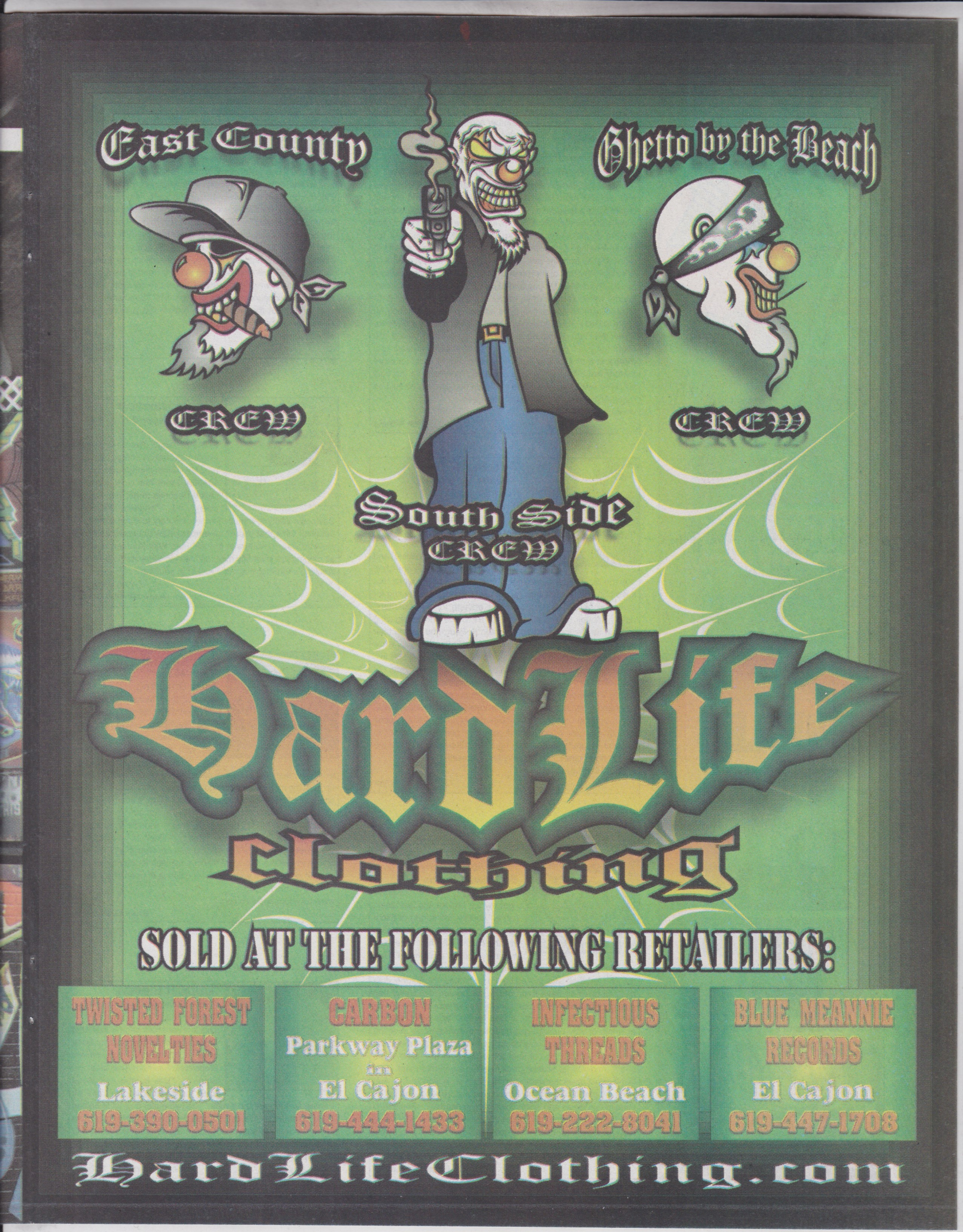
Coming out of the Norwegian scene, Age of Silence plays on its strengths as dramatic power metal with a vocalist with a high range. Liberal piano/keyboard adds a classical feel to the big power chords and intricate leads. The singer Lazare has already made a mark in bands like Borknagar and Solefad. And while his melancholic howl adds atmosphere and depth, backing vocals from Lars Eric Si play off of and bite against the main vocal tracks. This accomplishes a very progressive metal with lots of sonics and directions in each song. Perhaps even a little overly ambitious as individual song ideas can get lost amongst the multiple movements each track embraces. Technically accomplished but lacking in much punch, this will appeal most to those who can't get enough of that Euro-flavored power metal. Age of Silence aren't breaking any molds, but the vocal interplay is something fresh and the keyboards make the metal all that more dramatic. If for no other reason, it's great to see Norway kicking out something more ambitious than the black metal.
www.ageofsilence.com

Bushman

The Code
"Rhetoric of Reason"
(Jump Start)

The Code come through with a remarkably Gilman Street-esque homage to punkers of yesteryear on this little four-track EP. With influences from Op Ivy to Slapstick (ok, so they're not technically Gilman, but still), "Rhetoric" is full of walking bass lines and two-tone elements, while still capable of delivering a few good shots to the ribs. The kicker is a cover of "Unity", which is every bit as good as Real Big Fish's cover, if that means anything to you. While "Rhetoric" may not showcase everything that The Code is capable of, it's still a pretty fun little album.
www.thecode.com

Brian Greenaway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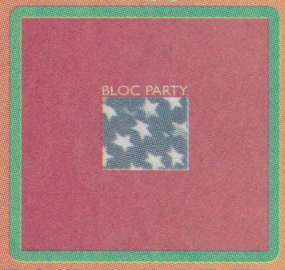

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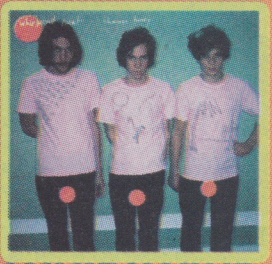

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WWW.DIMMAK.COM

Underoath

"They're Only Chasing Safety"

(Tooth & Nail / Solid-State)

Before you write this off as just another scream-o record, throw on a pair of headphones or take a 45 minute drive and soak the whole thing in, chances are you'll start wearing thick black glasses and button-down sweaters. Well . . . maybe not, but on their sophomore effort Underoath have returned with more focus, more linear song writing and enough hooks to fill a tackle box. They've also enlisted a new vocalist (Spencer Chamberlain) who provides some on-point emotional singing coupled with a scream that literally sounds as if his throat is being ripped open with every explosion that seems to erupt directly from the gut. The music is distorted yet crisp with a subtle amount of keyboards that provide a rich textured sound. Tracks like "Young and Aspiring" cater to the breakdown hungry hardcore kids while tracks like "Reinventing Your Exit" provide a more accessible indie sound. Like most bands on Tooth & Nail / Solid State they assert their Christianity, however if they didn't thank that dude Jesus profusely in the credits you might not even pick up on this. The lyrical content deals with the usual topics of loss and depression, but in a darker more mature way. This album has solidified Underoath as the best six piece since Wendy's 99cent chicken nuggets and should be required listening for any fan of The Used.

www.underoath777.com

John Adams

7-10 Split

"Kill the Messenger"

(New School)

Blending punk, metal, hardcore and pop (yeah, the kind Justin Timberlake used to sing about) 7-10 Split has created a sound that is catchy, aggressive, sensitive and extremely pissed off all in one shot. "Kill the Messenger" is not going to revolutionize the world, but it will bring quite a few fans to 7-10 Split. There is something for everyone here. They are hardcore enough for the thrashers, poppy enough for the blue haired TRL lovers and shoegazing enough for the indie rockers listening to Pedro the Lion in their basement. Smashing verses lead into melodic choruses, while a constant drive pushes everything toward the cliff 7-10 Split live under. Blending two genres is usually tops for most bands, but 7-10 Split has definitely created a strong sound out of four strong influences (given that the influences are very close neighbors). While they maintain to love Good Charlotte, Blink-182, Counting Crows and Third Eye Blind (yeah, I had the same look on my face when I found out), they continue to rock like skeletal beasts from the land of punk-metal-hardcore where the king is none other than the mighty JT himself.

www.7-10split.org

Pete Soyer

New Bomb Turks

"Switchblade Tongues, Butterknife Brains"

(Gearhead)

I got my car broken into last week. Lame. Luckily, the son(s) of bitches didn't get anything, cause I keep my shit clean. All I had to replace was my window, plus the AC button, which was somehow ripped off. I always feel bad for people who get their CDs jacked but I'd be stoked if someone stole this album so I'd have it out of my life forever. NBT play that piss poor brand of punk that's in the key of screech, heavy on the bass and overly snotty. "Bad for Me" is a quintessential example of why punk gets a bad name from anyone over the age of forty. I mean, how could anyone appreciate the same annoying lyric blurted out time and again over the same damn beat? And yes, all sixteen tracks get the same treatment. Shit like this just gives the whole genre a bad name, you know? And don't get me started on the heinous, dime-store recording value. Guitars this jangly and words this warbled need all the help they can get, and Gearhead's lackluster approach makes the whole sorry release that much more forgettable. I wouldn't wish this one o n the worst car thief in the world.

www.gearheadrecords.com

Brian Greenaway

Ektomorph

"Destroy"

(Nuclear Blast)

Hungarian thrash metal. The singer/guitarist (Zoltan) and bass-player (Csaba) are the brothers Farkas. How fucking cool is that, to have the name Zoltan? That's a level 27 Illusionist name if I ever heard one. But while many of their European peers gravitate toward the more powerful and dramatic spectrums of metal, Ektomorph hone in on their thrash and, dare I say, nu-metalish attack (think the rougher elements of Fear Factory without the keyboards). Barking vocals and stuttering rhythms play through the bulk of this assault. There is a slight gypsy-fied vibe to the intro that also finds its way into some of the solos (and the ending vocal stumblings of "Gypsy"). This reflects the European roots of the Farkas brothers most evidently and gives a dash of uniqueness to what is otherwise decent metal with a thrash attack. The consistent display of dynamics, speed and aggression throughout the whole album makes this a worthy listen. Hungarian metal. Who knew?

www.ektomorf.net

Bushman

Kimya Dawson

"Hidden Vagenda"

(K)

She has soul! That's something without question! Kimya Dawson has got some motherfucking soul dammit! From her work with The Moldy Peaches to her most recent solo work, "Hidden Vagenda" Dawson's ability to transcend contemporary folk/pop songs is a beautiful thing that should be embraced by squirrels, and people who wear sweaters in the summer. With fourteen songs in all running just over fifty minutes "Hidden Vagenda" is a sure hit stocking stuffer for that indie rocker in your family.

www.krecs.com

Gordon Downs

Billy Club Sandwich

"Chin Music"

(Inner Strength)

At first, "Chin Music" sounds like just another testosterone fueled, chest thumping waste of time. However, after spending a few minutes with the twenty-track behemoth, there's actually a lot going for it. Rather than just the same old metal-core combo, BCS serve up speedy, methodical breakdowns and driving beats, all set to songs of alienation and abandonment. Sure, it's nothing Bane hasn't already done better, but there's something about the lyrics on "Chin Music" that should really resonate with anyone who happens to give them whirl. "Infidel" is probably the strongest track on the album, and with couplets like "Exploding myself to see the real light/ Trading my flesh for eternal life," it's easy to see why. If your NYHC addition is in need of a little fix, this is the one for you.

www.billyclubsandwich.com

Brian Greenaway

Amps II Eleven

"Self-Titled"

(Smog Veil)

This is a hard rock band with a whiff of stoner rock to it arose from three other Cleveland ensembles: Stepsister, Southern Trespass and Shuteye. This is loud and proud rock 'n roll in the tradition of Pink Fairies, Motörhead and Kyuss. The two-guitar quartet is getting great press for its live set, but this debut album fails to capture enough energy to separate Amps II Eleven from the legions of other bands crowding this genre.

www.amsp2eleven.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Some Girls

"All My Friends Are Going Death"

(Deathwish)

Not to be confused with the poppy Juliana Hatfield band or the Rolling Stones album of the same name, this Some Girls includes members from the Locust, Unbroken, and Tristeza, and they mean fucking business. "All My Friends are Going Death" is a discography to date of the band, including their two previously released 7"s and some bonus covers of The Stooges, tucked away on track number 69. It's a chaotic blast of brutally heavy guitars and intense screaming that never lets you take a breath. Most of the songs hover around the one minute mark, with the longest clocking in at one minute and forty seconds... and this is what I found most disappointing about the album. The songs have sheer energy and intensity but arent very complex, which makes most tracks sound indistinguishable from one another. Not to mention they tend to be over when they sound like they're just getting started, which makes this album overall as only okay. With this lineup, I expected a little more, maybe a little more complexity and some hot guitar licks. They do have some nice song titles though, like "Some Girls Have all the Fuck."

www.deathwishinc.com

Matt Walker

Jenny Choi

"Postcard Stories"

(Double Zero / Suburban Home)

She sounds like Tori Amos and looks like Lucy Liu. OK, I made up the Lucy Liu part but her music is so pretty that I did a quick Google search and I can say that she is quite pretty (not that that makes me like her any more [yeah, right]). At least the Tori Amos part is legit, if you substitute some of Tori's world-weariness with deer-in-the-headlight innocence. A very accomplished musician, Choi croons her neo-jazz cocktail vignettes over lilting piano bars and the soft warmth of her cello. She is not alone in her act, as Tony Aronica's soft bass and Phillip Stone's moderated percussion accompany her sweeping, soulful sentiments. Sometimes evoking a bit of Billie Holiday with her moody hooks and atmospheric, smoky ambiance, Choi's "Postcard Stories" is the perfect album for everything from a sweaty summer's night make-out session to a rainy day wine and cheese party (after you've already gone through The Cardigan's "First Band on the Moon", of course). There's an openly honest introspection packed into the beguilingly simple music, causing Choi's sweepingly contagious tales to seep into every note of every track. It's not often that you come across a singer/songwriter with enough talent to carry a release on sheer magnetism, but Jenny Choi is undeniably one of them.

www.jennychoi.com

Brian Greenaway

Salty the Pocketknife

"Salty the Pocketknife"

(Sonance Records)

Just going with the artwork on the cover I never would have realized that I would open the CD just for it to reveal the most all-star thank you list I've ever seen. Some of the big hitters listed were Ben Stiller, Frank Zappa, Mike Patton, Stewart Copeland, and Jaco Pastorius! "Who in the name dropping hell do these guys think they are?!" I thought. Then I spotted the name, the one that would explain it all. Dustin Diamond, aka: Skreech, from our favorite mid-nineties show "Saved By the Bell" playing the ole four string. I had heard a million times over that Dustin had a band, but for it to just plop into my lap like this was quite a treat indeed. The music is spazzy, funky, jerky metal that gets hard and hectic, and to be honest really ain't so bad. The vocals are a different story. The vocals sound like they found a mellow dramatic stage actress to sing her version of a hopped up, rock witch. Very creepy. At times, the vocals sound like samples from "The Exorcist". You know, the part when the girl is barfing milk and oatmeal. There is rock happening here, but vocals mean too much to just be overlooked.

www.saltythepocketknife.com

Thom C

The Crumbs

"Last Exit"

(TKO)

Bouncy, upbeat punk rock that blends the infectious nature of prestardom Hives with the straight-up, no-frills delivery of early garage rock that you could only listen to on a 45 RPM record in your grandfather's Formica-lined basement. Twinges of country sneak in here and there, giving the whole vibe this feeling of cowboys who've totally let loose and you just wanna be in on the fun. Quick without being rushed and inoffensive without being as sissy as The Dickies, this is the closest you'll come to agreeing with your stupid club-going friends on how cool underground music can be without alienating the cud-chewing masses who have no idea that colleges have radio stations.

www.tkorecords.com

Keith Carman

Zebrahead

"MFZB"

(Egg)

The first time I heard Zebrahead was on a free compilation cassette a local video store was handing out. This was in rural Havre, MT, back around 1997. Zebrahead has come a long way since that free cassette. They have tapped every popular pop-punk style currently circulating through the music mainstream. With "MFZB" they are poised to spring onto a Warped Tour stage and make the blue haired kids jump up and down. "MFZB" sounds like Samiam, Linkin Park, Good Charlotte, Blink-182, Jimmy Eat World, Goldfinger and Limp Bizkit. They don't sound like all those at the same time, but all those sounds make an appearance on the CD. They open with "Rescue Me", which sounds like it is straight off of Samiam's "Astray". The second song sounds like Fred Durst raped Good Charlotte and the baby was born singing. The track "Blur" sounds like a B-side from "Bleed American". Two songs later on "In To You" Goldfinger makes their appearance. And so the album goes. Sounding like other bands isn't a terrible thing. At least they sound (with the exception of Limp Bizkit) like decent bands. Even the best bands have hints of someone else. Aside from the copy cat sounds, this album is solid from start to finish. The pop-punk is strong and the rap-metal is much better than Fred Durst's. It is not on par with Linkin Park, but hey, it still sounds good. For someone living in a closet who has never heard any of the aforementioned bands, Zebrahead is a great introduction into the genre. If you are a fan of pop-punk, trick your friend into buying it and just borrow it. Zebrahead has definitely taken some major steps since that comp tape in Montana, but they still have a few more steps to go before they are standing completely on their own. Everything is there that they need. They just need to let go of the popular influences. Do it the Zebrahead way.

www.zebrahead.com

Pete Soyer

Murs and Slug

"Felt: A Tribute to Christina Ricci"

(Access Hip-Hop)

Two emcees. Two hearts on two sleeves. What more can you expect when you put Slug and Murs on one EP, than to get a half hour of emotionally charged, vulnerable hip-hop music? Done by two of the most respected emcees on the underground hip-hop circuit, "Felt: A Tribute to Christina Ricci" was supposed to be a sure-shot effort. Thank overrated, flat-out piss poor, computer-obsessed, Living Legend producer, The Grouch, for screwing up a project that was indeed too good to be true. While he laces 'Anneurysm' with a beautifully mysterious soundscape that sounds like it will explode, he produces cheap, quick, and easy technological beats for much of the rest. Though Slug's emotional blood, sweat, and tears, combined with Murs', thug who isn't afraid to cry, style is complete bliss together on one EP, this should be your answer to the question: can good lyrics save an album of bad beats? The answer? No.

www.accesshiphop.com

Eric Thompson

Since The Flood

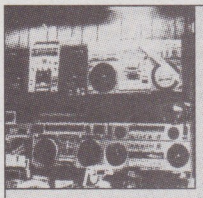
"Valor and Vengeance"

(Ironclad)

The third release from Ironclad Recordings (Trevor from Unearth's personal label) is a powerhouse. Since the Flood may seem like your typical "metalcore" but when you look beyond what's right in front of you this release is a combination of intricate guitars and death metal brutality. The true genius becomes apparent when they try to deviate from the standard heavier than thou metalcore formulas so many new acts have become accustomed to. '24K' is a perfect example of this band's ability to stray from the norm with its sporadic nature, intricate guitar work and blast beat drumming. 'In My Eyes' is another album standout where the band shines. This album isn't flawless, but definitely worth checking out.

www.sincetheflood.com

James Wright



Mahjongg

"Machine Gong EP"

(Cold Crush)

Dance music with guitars, old keyboard effects and some funky vocals. Mahjongg has a great groove and a very original sound. Throw this on at the next gathering and you're sure to be the hit for the night... as long as there's people there that like to fucking bring it on.

www.coldcrushrecords.com

Thom Cooper

Stand & Fight

"Self-Titled"

(Bridge Nine)

This is everything old school-influenced hardcore should be: short, brash songs that recall the finer chant-a-long moments of early Sick Of It All or Agnostic Front before Roger Miret became a caricature of his Epi-posing self. Tight blasts of unbridled anger that clock in under two minutes, these guys are in desperate need a Metallica-inspired "session" but if they had one, it might turn this Earth A.D. into their St. Anger. From the thunderous blast of "My Right" to the reckless abandon of "Dead In The Eyes", there is nothing here that indicates slowing down, reintegration in to "normal society" or anything less than a future of hatred and bitter old men grumbling about society. While it's sad these guys will probably stay in the underground with their bombastic fury, it just means they'll stay that much more special to us in The Know.

www.bridge9.com

Keith Carman

The Working Title

"Everyone Here is Wrong"

(Redemption)

Some guy called me a "fucking midget" at my last softball game. I admit I'm not the tallest guy around, but what I lack in height I make up for in cuteness. I still thought it was pretty heartless, though. Not as heartless as this soul-sucking, Creed-impersonating, waste of American engineering. Working Title? I've got a title for you-how about "Cheese Blowers" or "Dickless Potatoes"? Why not suck a little bit more? Why not rip off bands on the radio that everybody already knows sucks? How can you be in a band and utterly and totally fail to rock? Your sentiments are fake, your sound is bought, your style is played, and your guitars make me want to sleep. And the voice cracking on-key at the end of the notes? Yeah, Coldplay already does that, and just cause it got him Gwyneth doesn't mean it's going to work for you. Instead, it just sounds like a feeble attempt at hipness, which contrasts so horrifyingly sharply with the whole subdued rock ("Oh, I know-we could sound like Chris Martin AND Creed! We'll move millions of units!") that it makes me just want to turn it off. So I will. But not before I stick up for Coldplay, because those guys sound good.

www.theworkingtitle.com

Brian Greenaway

Coliseum

"Self-Titled"

(Level Plane)

Scene dropping: Louisville. Yes, everything from there rocks balls. Name Dropping: Ryan Patterson. He was one of the guitarists of The National Acrobat that went on to form Black Cross. In Coliseum, he still plays guitar but picks up the barking vocal duties as well. Sound dropping: Loud fast blistering punkish rock. Think Motorhead meets Discharge. Big walls of guitar and bass careen through every track. An unyielding attack of punk powered rock and roll done right. The Result: Twelve tracks (many less than two minutes) drives the point home quick with a distorted reckless drive. Think Zeke with more range.

www.coliseumsoundsystem.com

Bushman

The Explosion

"Red Tape"

(Tarantulas)

There has to be a place for solid punk-rock songs with a rock twist. The Explosion brings the power of rock full force with their "Red Tape" EP. I miss the days when bands would rock your ass off with their songs, make you dance and then want to make out with some dirty slut at the bar. 'Here I Am' is easily better than any of the songs on your "Punk-O-Rama" CDs, while 'The Drawback' has that wonderful dirty-punk sound in the guitars making it all the better. Think of The Clash but less political and drinking way more beer; if you've ever seen the movie Hardcore Logo you know what I'm talking about. Sure there are only 3-songs to this album but they fucking rock and that's really all that matters. The Explosion; for those about to rock we salute you.

www.theexplosion.net/xplsn/xplsn.htm

James Wright

Tommy Stinson

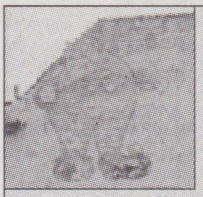
"Village Gorilla Head"

(Sanctuary)

The former Replacements bass player is now back with a vengeance on Village Gorilla Head. After roving around to different projects following The Replacements' demise, he appears to have assimilated his collective musical efforts into one record that doesn't let us down. Starting with the opening track, "Without a View", Stinson explores the mellow side of rock 'n roll while elsewhere he picks up the pace and lays out well-written rock numbers encouraging us to play along. Shifting gears again, Stinson blends in tracks like "Motivation" and "Couldn't Wait" - two songs that play on a similar stage to the current garage rock craze. When all is said and done, Village is perfectly eclectic in taste and performance.

www.tommystinson.com

Campbell



The '89 Cubs

"There Are Giants in the Earth"

(Slowdance)

This Omaha trio is composed of former members of other indie/emo bands. The drummer is from Conor Oberst's side project band Los Desparecidos and the guitarist is from The Good Life. But this emo effort seems determined to rise above the fame of their previous bands. The first indication is when lead singer David Brennan croons, "We'll make history" over and over in the track, "Oh, the things we put in our heads." But rarely does the band launch into a song without a minute-long intro of guitars and instrumentation. Definitely not for short attention spans or those who don't appreciate a soundtrack to, like the cover of the record suggests, a grey day amongst abandoned buildings and deserted urban sprawl. Pop in this CD, have a cigarette and a microwaveable meal alone in your runned-down apartment. The '89 Cubs are the repeat soundtrack for the emotional rollercoaster of the turbulent 20's.

www.slowdancerecords.com

Steven Harbaugh

Bravehearts

"Bravehearted"

(Nas & Ill Will Records)

Much to my dismay, this album had nothing to do with William Wallace or Mel Gibson. (Snare, Snare, Cymbal) Queens Bridge's golden boy, Nas, is at it again, with his understudies The Bravehearts. New York Gangster to the fullest: Bitches, Money, Guns and Drugs. Cutting Edge? Hmmmm…The list of notable producers might be impressive, with the likes of Lil' Jon, Swizz (Casio Keyboard Loop) Beatz, and L.E.S. Really the beats are cool if you are into the whole Queens Bridge sound, and the numerous appearances by Nas carry a lot of the album…But your album would also be carried by Nas, if it he was to make so many cameos on it. A more elaborate breakdown features skits full of yelling and shooting, a couple club oriented jams to feed the machine, a couple songs with sweet young ladies singing the hooks, and basically (To de-elaborate) containing the same elements as every other run of the mill East Coast Gangster release. If you own everything Nas has ever recorded, you will be well accustomed to the QB architecture found on "Bravehearted", a CD I lent to my friend and forgot all about.

www.bravehearted.com

Hugh Knight

Sounds Like Violence

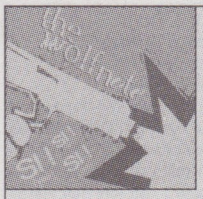
"The Pistol"

(Deep Elm)

From the layout to the name I thought this was going to be another hardcore disc with screams I couldn't understand and squealing guitars I didn't care about. I was completely wrong. "Sounds Like Violence" is a mix of Sparta, Dinosaur Jr. and Violent Femmes. The disc explodes open with "You Give Me Heartattacks (sic)." Aside from the off key singing to start the track, everything else pulses with urgency. This EP is only six songs, but Sounds Like Violence does more in six songs than most do in an entire album. They do more in six songs than Creed has done with three albums. But Reggie and the Full Effect can do more with six songs than Creed can in three albums. But I digress. Sounds Like Violence is explosive enough to actually sound like violence, but melodic enough to bring the summers of 1993 and 1994 floating through my mind. Back when J. Mascis was the shit and music was growing instead of receding. Punchy rhythms mix with flowing melodies while lyrics about loss circle like flies over carrion. The Pistol is a great introduction to these guys (if you're retarded like me and haven't heard them before). If you have been following them all along, this will further solidify the reason you love them.

www.soundslikeviolence.com

Pete Soyer



The Wolfnote

"Si! Si! Si!"

(Faraway)

No! No! No! That's a low blow huh! It's not completely true, it was just my first reaction. The Wolfnote reminds me of a band that plays aggressively, methodically, and pretty on point. The problem is that it's hard to make a connection. It's like reading on the can and you get that winning push, whatever you were reading during that push probably didn't fully stick in the ole' noggin'. Most likely you'll have to re-read or move on. I can relate them to bands like Drive Like Jehu, or more recently to bands like The Plot to Blow Up The Eiffel Tower. They have that spazzy, angry vibe but you know there's not really that much testosterone goin' around. The last tune in particular, "Au Revoir De Beauvoir" (that might not be the title but they were arranged funny on the back) is the easiest to swallow with its moments of mellow drama. If you have a reading poopoo problem like me, you might need to work with "Si! Si! Si!" a little.

www.thewolfnote.com

Thom Coop

The End

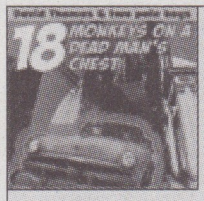
"Within Dividia"

(Relapse)

Back in the day I would have just called it grindcore, but this is "pissed as fuck core", or maybe "we'll fuck you up core" would both be appropriate. The End play nerve jarring, bone breaking, metal that has to be from somewhere evil. It's fucking tough from start to finish.

www.relapserecords.com

Thom Cooper



David Thomas & Two Pale Boys

"18 Monkeys On A Dead Man's Chest"

(Smog Veil)

Pere Ubu frontman David Thomas presents a focused and driven release that at times borders on the harrowing. This certainly is exciting, visceral music. The orchestrated collisions of brass, guitar and electronics causes data panic in the post-modern day and age. Andy Diagram's electric trumpets and the guitar and violin of Keith Moliné expresses Thomas' most malevolent metaphors in songs like "Numbers Man" as well as well as supporting the pace-wrecking theremin ballad "Little Sister". Issues of pacing and uneven mood aside, this is one good record.

www.SmogVeil.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Cobra High

"Sunset in the Eye of the Hurricane"

(Cold Crush)

There's no easy explanation for the music of the Portland four-piece Cobra High. There's no handy one-word description. Post punk, goth, industrial, new wave... none of them quite cut it. It's got the darker industrial elements of Milemarker. It's got the fat and catchy bass lines, a la Pretty Girls Make Graves. They go where the Faint couldn't with some danceable electronic stuff. There's some funky high hat play. There's a definite 60's / 70's Garage rock feel too. At the beginning of the second track, "White Diamond" I heard parts that Aimee Mann could have penned. The album goes through all the motions as the instrumental sixth track, "El Fang Dorado," acts as the urgent climax, while tracks seven and eight play out the denouement. The last track, "A Leaded Trace," is an ethereal spacey piano song that is somewhat reminiscent of Suede's "The Next Life". With all the different stuff going on they still manage to keep it together. It all fits to form something incredible and all together original. They definitely didn't have a problem avoiding a pigeonhole with their surprisingly well-formed debut record. It's eight daring tracks, two of which are instrumental, all of which manage to escape easy description.

www.coldcrushrecords.com

Sebastian U.

The Hold Steady

"Almost Killed Me"

(Frenchkiss)

The Hold Steady is a New York City quartet fronted by songwriter/vocalist Craig Finn from Minneapolis art-punk project Lifter Puller. Also from Lifter Puller is the guitarist Tad Kubler. The band's music has a loose, wide-opened jam feel. While many indie bands are overtly post-punk, this group recalls more such power blues projects as Black Oak Arkansas and Cream, without any gratuitous leads. Overall, this makes the music simple and rugged, the sonic equivalent of a good work boot. What really makes it worthwhile is the lyrics chockfull of cultural references like decade stereotypes ("Positive Jam"), icons from Patti Smith to Nina Simone ("The Swish") and the bar band scene ("Barfruit Blues"). Someone looking at indie rock through the lens of having lived through the '80s once been in a bar band and still collecting records will smile at all the references in songs like "Most People are DJs", "Baby take off your beret/because everyone's a critic and most people are DJs."

www.theholdsteady.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

UDO

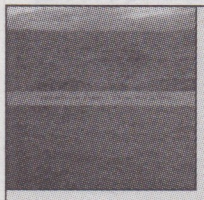
"Nailed to Metal - The Missing Tracks"

(AFM)

It's UDO. He used to sing for Accept. He's the famous gravelly voiced German who sang the over rated song "Balls to the Walls." You probably remember that one huh? I bet you liked to sing along? You've got your balls to the wall, yeah! This live CD has UDO performing "Balls to the Wall", a nearly nine minute long epic rendition of "Balls to the Wall." Could the world have survived without it? The sad answer is most assuredly, "NO." The album also includes "Fast as a Shark," and that's the song Accept should be remembered for. That's the real kicker. Certainly one of the best metal songs of all time. I kid you not. Sound quality? The live sound quality is snappy. The ride cymbal - is there such a thing as a ride cymbal? If there is it's too up front in the mix, it's in my head; it's killing me, riding me, destroying me with its incessant hissing. Poo. Fast as a Shark!

www.afm-records.de

DICK



The One AM Radio

"A Name Writ in Water"

(Level Plane)

A lot of the tunes are slow somber pop tunes with some electric drumming and effects, giving it a spacey, ambient vibe. The pace stays pretty slow throughout but has great melodies that kept the listener interested. The vocals sound a lot like that of Rodney Sellars from Sensefield, but even so, The One Am Radio certainly have an original sound going on.

www.level-plane.com

Thom Cooper

Head Automatica

"Decadence"

(Warner)

Recognized as the throat behind hardcore-band-on-hiatus Glassjaw, Daryl Palumbo IS both the figure-head and man behind the curtain, carrying Head Automatica's debut album "Decadence" on his shoulders as both a vocalist and as a musician... and does it well. Fans of Daryl's previous side project endeavors are well aware that while his first love might be Glassjaw, hip hop and avant-garde dance is his second, which is pretty much why Head Automatica exists at all. With the assistance of Dan "The Automator" Nakamura (best known for his associations with Gorillaz, rapper Del and concept groups like Lovage and Handsome Boy Modeling School) and the drumming of Glassjaw's only other founding member Larry Gorman, Head Automatica is not angry, not hardcore and not fucking bad, either. "Decadence" combines electronic pop with garage rock into an actual swallowable album; compare this as the disco dance version of acts like Chk Chk Chk or The Faint, although Daryl really says it best: "We're an electronic cock-rock band". Some worthy tracks for the virgin listener are "Beating Heart Baby" (their single and definitely one of the best on here), dreamy "Solid Gold Telephone" and the closest song to Glassjaw's "Worship and Tribute" album, "The Razor".

www.headautomatica.com

PR!

by Thom Cooper

Iggy and the Stooges, New York Dolls, Motorhead, The Ramones... that's rock goddamnit. And here we have Lion Fever, a rock n' roll band formed two years back in Americas hippy wetlands, also known as Portland, Oregon. Guitar/vocalist Jennifer Pearl (Lost Kids), drummer turned bassist David Clifford (Pleasure Forever), and drummer Kevin Garrison (Get Hustle/Angel Hair) are what turns Lion Fever's latest "Lustre" into raw, powerful fucking rock, loaded with emotion and passion that is just non-existent in many records nowadays. "Lustre" wails and pulsew with soulful elements of the blues, the energy of early punk and so importantly the vocals of ex-Lost Kids guitarist Jennifer Pearl. These are vocals, guitar riffs, drumming, and bass playing that are coming from people who been around the block. People who have played dirty empty clubs in random cities in states that we forgot about. "Lustre" has been released on Dim Mak records, a label that is becoming notorious for busting out some of the newest and coolest rock (The Gossip), dance rock (Dance Disaster Movement), and various electronic acts to date... certainly a label whose discography I suggest you examine. Lion Fever is playing a brand of rock that is so rare and real, it gives us hope that there are people that really know what rock should sound like. Lion Fever style.

Anam Cara

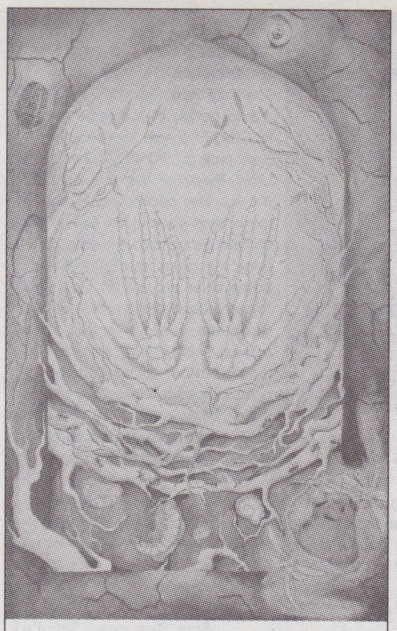
"Self-Titled"

(Strikefirst)

Yet another hardcore group emerges, but this time it's with a more melodic twist. Ana Cara combine the solid punch of Thrice combined with a melodic musical foundation. The music is surprisingly good hardcore bringing to mind young screamers Alexisonfire or even Thursday at times. There are some great grooves here and good solid melodic guitar work as demonstrated in "A New Sun Rises". Unfortunately, the album's positive moments are overshadowed by the poor production and a muddy mix, which hinders the music and its potency. Expect good things from these youngsters from Florida.

www.anamcararock.com

James Wright



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Diecast
"Tearing Down Your Blue Skies"
(Century Media)

One of the more anticipated metal releases of 2004, Diecast has returned with an adjusted band line-up and a new and better sound to show for it. Building on the thrashmetalcore of their previous and well-received release (2001's "Day of Reckoning"), the most noticeable change on this newest is the vocal presence. Paul Stoddard is the new throat and he has brought the band up about three notches. While retaining all the aggression and throaty screams of previous Diecast metal attacks, Stoddard also has a commanding clear voice that he uses liberally. Mix that with some of the more precise metalcore/hardcore guitars the scene has to offer, and the end result is metal done well with actual hooks in the vocals. It's great to hear stark Hatebreed type moshing breakdowns being lifted up by soaring vocals that have talent and range. But don't be mislead into thinking this is a 'softer' Diecast. Stoddard can scream, bark and rage through the bulk of the material giving the metal edge the music demands. But when the band his melody, they really hit something catchy and memorable. There are SO many good metal releases this year, this should be in the top five for sure. By far, this is the best Diecast release to date. If they can hold this lineup together (they've had 17 different guitarists for chrissakes), "Tearing Down Your Blue Skies" marks one hell of a new direction for the band to develop in. The perfect blend of thrashmetal and hardcore. It's that good. File this next to that new Shadows Fall, All That Remains and Unearth discs. Fuel for the pit people, fuel for the pit.
www.bhcdiecast.com

Bushman

Peter White
"Confidential"
(Columbia)

I consider smooth jazz to be desirable in two situations, either in an elevator or in the waiting room at the doctor's office. Not to say it's a bad thing, just not my cup of tea. Peter White's "Confidential" is a sleeper, literally. While listening to the album at work, I nearly dozed off half a dozen times due to the overwhelming instrumentals and lacking vocals that I normally crave with any album, despite the genre. "Endless Journey", the 11th and final track, is just as the title implies, with a run-time of over 8 minutes. The cover of the album is totally cool though, featuring a mini-story to describe the original artwork...this is the one facet of the album that's definitely worth checking out.
www.peterwhite.com

Melanie

Aborted
"The Haematobic EP"
(Listenable)

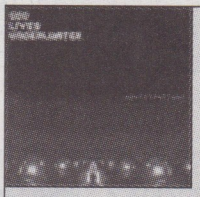
Sometimes it's all in the type font eh? Surprise, the band is called Aborted and this is death metal. Do you need another death metal band? You might when it's this good. Yeah, it's got the trademark cookie monster vocals that are nothing more than a harsh grumble, but check the dramatic guitars. They rip supersonic speed riffs apart like so much unborn fetal matter. Stomping monster slow parts smashed against speed of light guitar frenzies produces six songs of blackness done well. And with a genre so overdone in every direction, the best one can strive for in death metal is to create something truly decimating. Aborted spew forth a most unholy thrashy death approach on this EP. Ears shall bleed accordingly.
www.goremageddon.be

Bushman

213
"The Hard Way"
(TVT)

It's about fucken time that the West Coast came out with some music... I had to listen to the album three times just to figure out what was missing: Lil John and the Ying Yang Twins, the current generic staples of mainstream rap. 213 is a very diverse album by three hip hop legends: Warren G, Snoop Dogg, and Nate Dogg. Most of "The Hard Way" is pretty smooth with the usual humerous twists and tongue lashes - a '64 Impala is optional but highly suggested for proper listening.
www.tvtrecords.com

Cat Dumas



God Lives Underwater
"Up Off The Floor"
(Locomotive)

Nine Inch Nails meets Marilyn Mason humping on Orgy while listening to a Pitchshifter album. And while all the above need a team of musicians and engineers, GLU is a duo composed of David Reilly (keyboards, guitars, vocals) and Jeff Turzo (keyboards, guitars). Ok, they use some musicians for their live shows, but the music is born in the two-piece. Catchy guitars and industrial laced rock. Big choruses and stripped down electro romps that groove with danceable beats. Vocals play prominently into the mix, luckily Reilly can hold the presence with a whispery intensity, sounding like he's taking cues from Reznor without trying to mimic him. Coming off with a radio ready slickness, but not suffering in any way for it, God Lives Underwater should aptly fill the commercial void left by NIN. If Orgy could get as big as they did, GLU should have no trouble building a sizeable audience with this release.
www.enjoyglu.com

Bushman

The Vanishing
"Still Lifes Are Falling"
(Gold Standard Labs)

Dark, forboding industrial electrobeats are the specialty served up by this San Francisco trio. Taking a decidedly bleaker and blacker tone than their debut effort, the beats seem to be front and center, consistently overpowering the band's female vocals. Vocals in this band seem to almost function as the background accessory like they were shouted from cavernous depths owned by the synths and drum machines that pull the strings. Occasionally a lone saxophone sneaks in. The Vanishing sound a bit like electro-band Ruby gone industrial. Digital Hardcore's Hanin Elias steps in to remix the final track of this album, "Still Lifes" making it one of the best tracks on this dark soundscape of electro-hell.
www.thevanishing.com

Steven Harbaugh

The Plastic Constellations

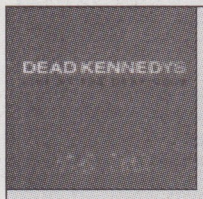
"Mazatlan"

(2024)

Just a hint of white boy rock-rap comes to the surface from the depths of grinding guitars, almost like 311 meets a Fugazi/Pavement hybrid. The guitar skills here are evident and that is one of the most promising aspects of this album because the vocalizations seem to be lost in what direction they want to be taken. This Minneapolis band loves shifting, unpredictable tempos and indie-pop melded with rap-rock. My recommendation is to ditch the white boy rap portions altogether and just stick to indie-pop where this band really shines. Rap-rock went out with Limp Bizkit and 311 and keeping it in just makes the album seem awkward and unfulfilling.

www.theplasticconstellations.com

Steven Harbaugh



Dead Kennedys

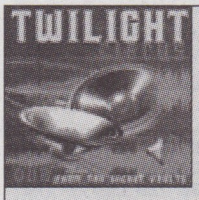
"Live at the Deaf Club"

(Manifesto)

This previously unreleased live concert is from early 1979, the last performance of guitarist 6025 in the then five-man lineup of the band. At times the band is sloppy, as in the early version of "When You Get Drafted" entitled "Back in Rhodesia". Also, the group positively revels in the use of Echoplex making for an incongruous but accurate look at the early sound for the group. As Jello experiments with possibilities of extending his voice cartoonishly, the group delivers "Gaslight", a song heretofore unreleased. The raucous set also includes "California Über Alles" with Jerry Brown lyrics, of course, "Holiday in Cambodia" and even a version of "Back in the USSR" all from a time when the DKs seemed to be on the same page.

www.manifesto.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte



Twilight Circus

"Dub from the Secret Vaults"

(ROIR)

Ryan Moore is the one man creative behind Twilight Circus Dub Sound System. An admitted fan of the earliest of ROIR dub cassette releases, Moore gives some back with this album of roomy old school dub creations. While this is the Canadian's 11th album, it is the first with a domestic release. Some tracks like "Slyy" show subtle touches of the bands he worked in: Legendary Pink Dots and Tear Garden. However, most are large and languid monster steps of the echoic dub species. The premier U.S. release was scoured from Twilight Circus' archives for a career-spanning opus of previously unreleased material. Fans of Bill Laswell and Lee Perry will appreciate the mysterious sounds of this dub alchemist.

www.roir-usa.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Mental

"Get An Oxygen Tank!"

(Bridge Nine)

Mental has the image down pat. They blend the coolest elements of all underground scenes ('50s greaser art with hardcore attitude and more tattoos than Dashboard Confessional). The problem is that their music just sounds so generic, you'd rather listen to someone else while you stare at the CD packaging. A singer that mumbles his way through each song is more grating than Obituary and their "screaming is an instrument" delivery, despite an actually cool sound and the music is just sort of...there. Blending stock riffs that blend old school hardcore breakdowns with slight punk rock 'n' roll (that would be 1-4-5 patterns for the musicians), they have the potential to shred some serious cakehole, but on this release, it does little more than make you want to give them your copy of The Age Of Quarrel and learn "We Gotta Know" for homework.

www.bridge9.com

Keith Carman

Coheed and Cambria

"In Keeping Secrets of Silent Earth: 3'

(Columbia)

Any band that attempts to take on a concept record about intergalactic civil war should be complimented. Coheed and Cambria have done that and made an incredible record in the process. With a sound that's one part Rush, another classic, sprinkled with a dash of emo creates something truly unique. The title track sets to record off with a larger than life chorus that will make you pump fists in unison. 'Blood Red Summer' has this classic pop sounding scatting that nobody could resist. Honestly, this is an amazing record and unless you've been living in a cave for the past year, you don't need me to tell you how good it is; buy it!

www.coheedandcambria.com

James Wright

Mudville

"The Glory of Man is Not in Vogue"

(Slurry)

Be quick to judge and you will only broaden your Portishead-based definition of trip hop to include this excellent opus featuring the vocalist and wordsmith Marilyn Carino. Ruminate more on the layers of meaning that can be unraveled from the mysterious, timely title and you will find further treasures of vivid metaphor and sophisticated simile on such songs as "The Hero of the World" and "Othello". It is on "Othello" that versatile vocalist Carino delivers in a lyric reminiscent of late-, jazz-period Joni Mitchell. However, the Annie Lennox solo recordings may be a better reference point for the rest of the album, since Carino shares with Lennox the potent, smoky voice of the pop mezzo that introduces a compelling mystery in depth to such striking images as "diamond backs of surfer girls", "flying bat-rat ponies" and other semi-surrealistic lines from this exquisite album. Julee Cruise comes to mind here, too. Do not call it "trip hop", call it a trip past the limits of pop.

www.mudvillemusic.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

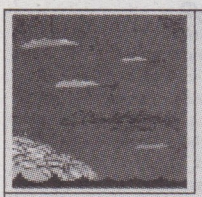
Three 6 Mafia

"Da Unbreakables"

(Self-Released)

"Ima get my chief on/ while she sucks my ding dong/ eyes like a ching chong/ hard on like King Kong." Fuckin' amazing! Do you know about the Sizzerpp? The Syyzzzrrrpppp? Down south they like to drink liquid codeine (or Tylenol w/codeine). Sometimes they mix it with some juice. Sometimes they put some "Jolly Ranchers/ man that shit be good as fuck", in with the syzrp. Now, if Speed and Ecstasy are responsible for Techno, and Rave parties, then imagine what a party is like when everyone is "Sippin' on some syrup". How could you holler at honey dips if you are leaning against the wall drooling on yourself? I felt like I was going to conk out listening to this album, which is definitely the equivalent of Audio Syzrp. Good thing the bass is hittin' like a muhfucka to keep you awake. This shit is SO GANGSTER; it'll have your Loc's jumping from your face, and runnin' back to the liquor store where you bought 'em. They got a song dedicated to a sack of weed, which is made up of three different strains of weed, and they call it "Bin Laden Weed". Slow and Rock Solid. If "Da Unbreakables" wasn't slow enough for you, check the DJ Screw style remix version "Chopped & Screwed". Those crazy bastards down there got that Southern Hip-Hop formula down to mastery, and anything you hear on the radio that's Crunk Gangsta; owe a whole Cadillac trunk-load of thanks to these project pioneers. But really folks, codeine isn't really something you want to be partying with, unless you're ROCKIN' the latest Three 6 Mafia…And making it real Crunk…And keepin' it REAL Gangster.

Hugh Knight



The Robot Ate Me

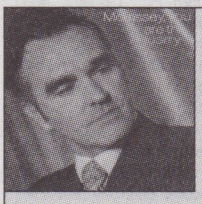
"On Vacation"

(Swim Slowly)

Hailing from "sunny and mostly superficial" San Diego, The Robot Ate Me follow up their 2002 release, "They Ate Themselves", with a self produced, hand sewn, hand numbered, double disc release, limited to 5000 copies. The ten-page booklet was designed and illustrated by Daniel Gibson who also did the art for the first album. The artwork alone makes it worth the purchase. The first disc takes an ironic almost playful romp through some of history's ugliest moments. It is set to samples of crackly old records, some of which sound like they could have preceded one of FDR's fireside chats. Singer Ryland Bouchard makes some subtle and clever confrontations to issues like racism, religion, politics, genocide, and consumerism. He sets a lightly sarcastic mood that decries the modern world with a sense of humor. Boucher cleverly expresses his sentiments with songs that have titles like "The Republican Army", "Crispy Christian Tea Time", "Every Nazi Plane Has a Cross" and "I Slept Through the Holocaust". The content of the second disc is a little bit lighter, but very musically appealing. It follows more closely in the footsteps of their first album, still ignoring all the rules of conventional pop music. They manage to once again create some of the most beautiful and incredibly original music I've heard in a long, long time. After the images of genocide, and Hitler making out with Jesus, the second disc reminds us that within the dissatisfied jaded recluse, resides a shy shoe shuffling nerd daydreaming about falling in love.

www.therobotateme.com

Sebastian U.



Morrissey

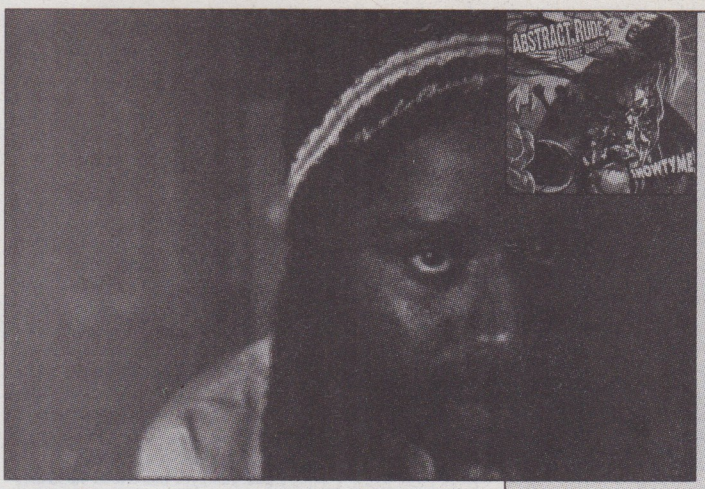
"You Are the Quarry"

(Attack)

The man, the myth, the legend's eighth studio album has Morrissey looking grey and somewhat wrinkled, but never sounding better (especially after his last two clunkers). Always the charmer, Morrissey shows up here brandishing a semi-automatic weapon and a stunning purple pinstriped suit. Setting the scene for "America Is Not the World", a scathing indictment of a bloated nation, in the typical polite, dry-witted English humor this guy has spent 20 years transforming into an art form. At times his age shows, getting a little too pensive for the new breed of Smiths fans, no doubt, but probably weakening the knees of those who have been with him since the beginning. As for me, Morrissey can absolutely do no wrong. Those silky smooth pipes, the caustic sense of humor, and all-around demeanor of the man. Love him and this new album to bits.

www.morrisseymusic.com

Jason Schreurs



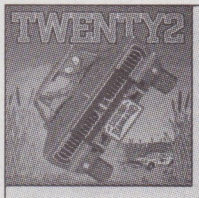
Abstract Rude & Tribe Unique

"ShowTyme"

(Battle Axe Records)

Don't let the rather frightening, revolt-inspiring album art deter you, as this Abstract Rude and Tribe Unique record is a bluesy, island-tinged, low-key listen. The burnished flow of "Stand and Deliver" will have you all mellowed out and pensive and shit like that. "Cooling" bops along sunnily on a snare-laced track, with Ab and crew soaking up sunshine and good times. These Battle-Axe veterans have been putting it down on wax for a minute now, and the their motor-mouth lyric-spitting skills and tight wordplay are showcased on "Showtyme is Now." Not revolutionary in scope, but far from garbage, the dudes flow as if they don't really care whether you want to listen or not. There is a timeless feel permeating the joint, as ARTU don't buy into the trends and hype, keeping it simple and maintaining their consciousness over casual beats that buoy and enhance the crew's message. Which I really didn't catch. Sorry.

Scott Burroughs



Twenty2

"The Dudes of Hazard"

(New School)

I listened to this CD twice, thank God, because I was about to pan it. My initial reaction was, okay, I've heard this before when it was called Strung Out. But on second listen I couldn't help but think, damn, this is actually pretty good stuff. Lyrically, it's a bunch of mumbo jumbo about girls, but musically, these guys can play. Fast, hard, loud. The drums alone are so kick ass I thought I was going to have a seizure when I cranked it up in my car. True, the sound is rehashed, but they're wise enough to change up the style from song to song, and even within the songs themselves, so that just when you think it's getting old, here comes something new. Think of the bastard child of NoFx, Strung Out, No Use for A Name, and pretty much all those other Fat Wreck Chords bands, that's Twenty2. The singer Jonh (yeah, it's spelled that way) is not the best punk singer I've heard, but he's got energy, and in punk that counts for a lot. I longed for some more backing vocals to fill out the space, but other than that, these guys have got a good thing going.

www.twenty2intl.com

Ryan Thomas

Angelic Upstarts

"The Punk Singles Collection"

(Ahoy)

The 17 tracks here represent all the singles A-sides released by the legendary Angelic Upstarts, including seven UK Top 75 hits. A full-color booklet offers pictures of each release and detailed notes. Beginning in 1977, the group always offered politically motivated lyrics more aware than radical, though. That is the group provoked as much thought as it did anger. The group even criticized the skinhead community from which it arose for racism and fascism as much as it looked outward to attack police brutality as on the debut 1979 single "Murder of Liddle Towers", included here. The 1980 follow-up "We Gotta Get Outta This Place" from this working class band is an excellent version of the ultimate protest rock song made famous by The Animals. The collection concludes with perhaps the most controversial song from the group, "Brighton Bomb" celebrating the IRA's attempt to assassinate the Conservative cabinet as well as the unabashed and pure patriotism of the 1980 release "England". Tracks that mark the band's move to include reggae and dub sounds include "I Understand" and "Different Strokes". This compendium is a testament to a talented band that used great underground rock songs to put its spin on complex issues in front of many through the charts as well as commercial and underground releases.

www.captainoi.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

JRoz

"Break Ground"

(Nomadic Sound System)

This is a prime example of why many female emcees have been given the cold shoulder by hip hop fans. Lauren Hill, Lioness, and Medusa are a few exceptions. To start of the album JROZ thanks some artist who inspired and turned her on to good music. Although some good names, it was too bad that everyone she named has only been around for the past 5 or 6 years. It would have been nice to hear her mention at least one pioneer. So with intro aside the number two track is honestly on of the worst hip hop beats I have heard in a while and also has one of the worst hooks. RE.4M, the albums producer definitely needs to sharpen up on some sounds, get some better samples if hes going to sample anything and try to use the creative side of the brain. A few upbeat tracks wouldnt have done any harm either and would have at least taken away from the albums redundant sound. A lot of JROZs words seem mumbled and hard to make out. Another downfall is the over usage of childlike metaphors. Cover them up like bandaids, she spits on one track. The chorus on Graffiti Anthem is almost laughable and it would help to get more than two songs that exceed the 3 minute mark. I have nothing against female artists. It is a great thing to hear a female emcee that can rhyme and is original. Unfortunately JROZ needs to work on both those aspects.

Tyson

Goapele

"Even Closer"

(Skyblaze / Columbia)

Tantalizing vocals and funky beats are an unbeatable combo. As talented as she is beautiful, South African beauty Goepele unleashes a Super-size serving of soul in "Even Closer", a culmination of musical awe assembled on both coasts with roots in the Bay Area. The love and salvation themes ring clear throughout her lyrics, almost summoning inner peace to calm the soul. "Ease Your Mind" features Pep Love who adds a flavorful taste, just as his name implies while "The Daze" is an R & B/Hip-Hop driven jam with Zion I & Casual. The compliments could go on forever. "Even Closer" puts Goepele just there, closer to major recognition and the true props she deserves.

www.goapele.com

Melanie

Brightblack

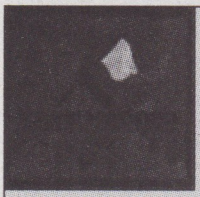
"ala.cali.tucky"

(Galaxia)

Mellow. I almost left that as the only word for this review, but I feel like that would have been kind of a cop out for Brightblack. Believe me, I'll save that for another unwitting band. The music is pretty good but if I saw these guys live I don't think that I would be able to handle it. I like my live shows energetic. The music is very folky, with hints of country, and blues. The primary sounds are the acoustic guitars, and vocals. At times some of the tunes seem to melt together due to the consistent vibe of the music. I can't say that I dislike it because there isn't that much to not like. They're not obnoxious, they're not overly poppy, and they're not glam, maybe just a little too mellow to always be listening to. But when your in the mood to just chill, I mean really, really chill, melt into your couch style, check out Brightblack. Just don't listen to this after an emotional night, it won't make your situation any easier.

www.galaxia-platform.com

Thom Cooper



Kane Hodder

"The Pleasure to Remain so Heartless"

(Suburban Home)

Kane Hodder (the band, not the guy who played Jason Voorhies) has just the right mix of hardcore angst, falsetto smiles and poppy guitars to avoid being sucked in by the mainstream. At first listen, I thought this was going to be another hardcore CD of scratchy screams and crunching guitars, but after the screams came a Velvet Teen-esque falsetto (something that is not present in hardcore) and a poppy guitar track Good Charlotte wishes they wrote. Kane Hodder is the thinking man's hardcore, pushing the boundaries of a stagnant genre to include more than straight out anger. They are showing that even the evilest of beings (Such as Jason Voorhies) has a soft side. While the outer appearance is hardened with years of brutality, the inside still has some poppy falsettos just dying to get out. Kane Hodder is letting it all out and it sounds good.

www.hodderrock.com

Pete Soyer

Please Mr. Gravedigger

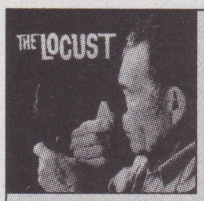
"Heres To The Life Of The Party"

(Pluto)

Please Mr. Gravedigger is a manic tour de force of unrelenting pandemonium and discordant brutality. Spawned from the original members of As I Lay Dying, the 5-piece offers up the kind of merciless keyboard-driven spazz parades along the lines of Nation of Ulysses, Try.Fail.Try, or Swing Kids. On Heres to the Life of the Party, PMG take the listener through a stomping ground of passionate angst-riddin punk and hardcore that provides the perfect soundtrack for being pissed off. I can imagine this band being insane live too, time to head East fellas!

www.pmgwillkillyou.com

Derek Meier



The Locust

"Follow The Flock, Step In Shit."

(ThreeOneG)

The Locust are a group of fine young men making extraordinarily loud and aggressive music during an era where wearing your heart on your sleeve seems to be more important than tea-bagging your friends' Hi-C. The Locust fuckin' stand out as an original band that offers up much more than the usual dog and pony show most musicians adhere to religiously. Fast, aggressive, loud and distorted are terms which best describe what The Locust are about, especially on "Follow The Flock, Step In Shit." The CD version is small as, fuck! Circa CD singles 1988 - but that's kool man! Rock those Oaks like you was Kool-Moe-Dee and pass me the Hi-C.

www.threeoneg.com

Gordon Downs

Hammerfall

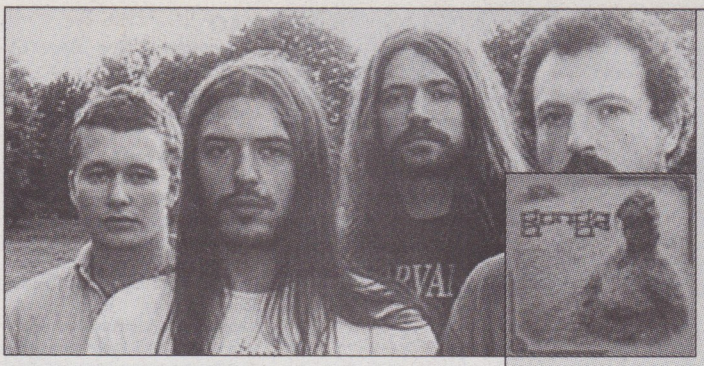
"One Crimson Night"

(Nuclear Blast)

This is a two-disc set of live Hammerfall. 22 tracks covers the spectrum of what Hammerfall does, namely Swedish flavored power metal. Power metal is a genre line that finds music fans on one side of the 'hate it' or 'love it' line. Not much middle ground. The sound is usually defined by liberal power chords interjected with intricate dual guitar leads and an endless barrage of double kick drums. And of course, the power metal singer with the ability to howl with an operatic range. Do your best parody of Rob Halford from Judas Priest, and you'll be close. As for Hammerfall, they are one of the best powermetal bands out there, so here is the beast live. Hammerfall do work a clichéd aspect of powermetal, and that's this obsession with Dungeon and Dragons type imagery. It comes from the whole Nordic upbringing I suspect. Hammerfall are guilty of such accusations, but again, for the powermetal fan, that would be like criticizing hardcore because they talk about 'rising up against opposition'. It just kind of comes with the territory. On this live release, the sound is clear and captures the essence of the live Hammerfall well. Although between song banter is in Swedish, it just drives home the cultural aspects to the band. This album is for the fans (as most live albums are) and shouldn't disappoint lovers of the progressive power metal attack from overseas.

www.hammerfall.net

Bushman



Gonga

"Self-Titled"

(Tee Pee)

Stoner rock. Oh yeah. Sabbathy riffs, all sludgy and bleak but kicking at the rock all the same. And considering the band is from Bristol, England, the Sabbath influence is no coincidence. In worship of the guitar riff, laid upon the alter of rock. It's doped up and laid back while still blowing the balls off the rock formula. Vocals are a hip, sly drawl that float upon the waves of fuzzy distortions. And they know when to shut up. Much of the charm of Gonga is the rock riff. Pure and simple. Often the songs just pull back and rock. The vocals are more of a dressing, utilizing a lot of repeated phrasings that just help keep the track in a more 'song' structure. Gonga is holding down the Sabbath end of the Fu Manchu and Nebula type rock bands. Twist one up, get some heavy eyelids and nod along to the rock trance Gonga will lay upon your soul.

www.gonga.co.uk

Bushman

Shoplifting

"Self-Titled"

(Kill Rock Stars)

The liveliest bunch of kids since Up With Motherfucking People rolled through your town. If this four-song debut is any indication of what this band is capable of, then the next few years should be fucking interesting (despite the fact that we'll all probably be living in a police state by then.) It's slightly sonic indie rock, with the sensibility of a ferret that can read English & Spanish and think human thoughts. If there's one thing I can say about Shoplifting, (other than I recommend and endorse them) is if you get a chance to see them live, yell at the chicks, "What's between your legs? Your CHAUNCH!?" It's important to include the, "your chaunch!?" part, because then they'll know you're cool and they'll probably give you a free sticker or button after the show for using the word chaunch. Good luck!

www.killrockstars.com

Gordon Downs

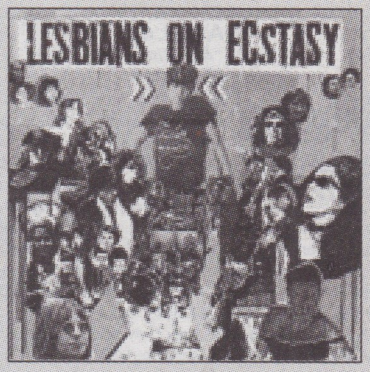
Funkstorung

"Disconnected"

(K7!)

Creepy Euro fuckers. I'm down with the whole Trip-Hop, Ambient, and Slow enough to shag to vibe. This is definitely cool out music. Yet, it is a stretch from Funkstorung's notable mash-ups they did for Bjork, and Wu-Tang Clan. Between the robot Rapper and the eerie poetic singing this stirs feelings of being in a subterranean freak club in Germany, dirty dancing with a pierced Vulcan haircut sporting version of Claudia Schiffer while I'm sipping some iridescent cocktail under the strobe light. Yeah…you should be stoned too if you give this a listen. It's mellow, ambient, and electro like lightning. I would recommend popping it in before shooting dope, or driving the Audubon in your Audi. One track takes me to that Hip-Hop place, which features Rob Sonic of Sonic Sum in the MC's position. Also check for Massive Attack vocalist Sarah Jay on the title track, alongside Nils Petter Molvaer on the horn, and German DJ M-Tec. This definitely goes with the ancient architecture and cobblestone streets that line one of Earth's oldest continents. Actually, I've never been to Europe, so I might just be bullshitting. I will, however, play this one again sometime soon. Keep it Euro.

Hugh Von Knight



by Gordon Downs

There are many venomous and deadly snakes thriving in Canada. Some snakes are innocuous. Others have an inspiring and crushing venom. Once the person is bitten, they acquire an unyielding hunger for the female vagina; aka: pussy. While many have proclaimed this particular strain of viper to be notoriously named the "lesbian-biting snake," due to the number of female victims that have been bitten by the snake and also happen to be lesbian, or subsequently became lesbian; I propose that there are just a lot of lesbians in Canada that enjoy hiking. One particular group of women that are known to have been bitten by the Mother Snake is the electro-rock outfit known as Lesbians On Ecstasy. While unavailable for comment on the "lesbian-biting snake" the representatives for Lesbians On Ecstasy did send over their debut self-titled album being released via Alien8 Recordings. Hailing from Montreal, L.O.E. supply thick beats and heavy electro-gasmic production sealed with the lesbo-brand of approval and are fighting the good fight for gender politics on their debut album. While the spastic Frankie Fearless takes up vocal duties, the rest of Lesbians On Ecstasy (Bernie Bankrupt, Véronique Mystique and Jackie the Jackhammer) bring it lesbonicly hard with songs influenced by some of the most prominent carpet munchers in the biz. Raiding the tunes of Tracy Chapman, Melissa Ethridge, Team Dresch, Indigo Girls and K.D. Lang - L.O.E. take the cake and smother it all over some vagina for consumption and secretion. The final track on the album, "Superdyke! (Live)" definitely makes this debut worth it! For the price of a surf and turf meal, you could own several copies of Lesbians On Ecstasy's debut album. Think about what matters most next time you drive by Sizzler. "WE'RE HERE! WE'RE QUEER! AND WE'RE ON NARCOTICS!" So heads up with Lesbians On Ecstasy and be cautious of snakes when camping. And keep those pot handles turned in!

www.alien8recordings.com

Darediablo

"Feeding Frenzy"

(Southern)

These guys have a song titled "Crockett & Tubbs". Remember Miami Vice? That was the shiznet when you were like age one. Seriously. It was super popular and men started to dress like Don Johnson and leave a little scruff on their face to have that rough exterior macho look. Here's a little pop culture tidbit: one of the major razor companies made a special blade that guys could use that would give them a shave, but not a clean shave. And it would leave them with that sexy stubble look. Don't ask me how I remember this. I wasn't even old enough to have hair on my balls yet when this all went down. I still don't have hair on my balls, but that's a different story. So I saw the title "Crockett and Tubbs" and I skipped to it after I realized the first two songs were tepid instrumentals that were little more than indulgent, lame prog excursions (same goes for the third song but even worse). I thought, man maybe these guys will satirize Crockett and Tubbs. Maybe they'll pay tribute to the pop icons. Maybe they'll mention the stubble. Nothing. Another instrumental teeming with organ. And not like the cool instrumentals that Jan Hammer weaved in and out of every episode of Miami Vice. Drat.

www.southern.com

Jeff Skruck

ZAO

"Legendary: The Best of ZAO 1997-2003"

(Solid State)

ZAO was metalcore when everyone else was nu-metal. During their relatively short lifespan, the artists formerly (and currently) known as ZAO endured multiple lineup changes, negative press from former members, and survived several musical mini-epochs. Oh, and also managed to make some heavy ass metal. "Legendary" will undoubtedly come as a bit of a bittersweet release to ZAO fans, as many of the singles: the absurdly feral "5 Year Winter", the haunting "Savannah", and the guitar driven madness of "The Race of Standing Still" will remind everyone that these guys were playing the popular music of today years ago. That being said, the track selection is a little bit suspect-yeah it's tough to pick fifteen tracks from an entire catalogue, but why include the three crappy demo versions at the end? And why not put them in chronological order so it's easier to note the dynamic changes the band went through every other week? Still, "Legendary" serves as a decent stand-alone for ZAO newcomers, and we can all be stoked they ended up on Ferret. I'm still not sure why they chose Bob Marley's title for their album, but whatever.

www.zaoonline.com

Brian Greenaway

Start Trouble

"Every Solution Has a Problem"

(Columbia)

"Every Solution Has a Problem" not only hits the nail on the head with a catchy title, but also lures in the novice listener with a punk rock style indicative of, well, every other mainstream punk band on MTV. Start Trouble isn't going to be starting much of anything with their crude ability to formulate original music with actual substance. Lyrics from the second track (aptly titled "Non Stop"), set the tone for the monotony of songs about drinking, sex and drugs: "I want to fuck non-stop, baby I think you're beautiful", is only the beginning. This foursome of Florida boys need to step it up if they ever plan on getting out of the dirty south for good. Not to say they suck, but there's a lot of room for growth.

www.starttrouble.com

Melanie

Patti Smith

"Trampin'"

(Columbia)

Still rockin', still fiery, still political, Patti Smith the poetic patron saint of the post-punk wave bestows upon the huddled masses eleven new songs. But, riddle me this: What hath in common Patti and Dayglo Abortions? Both seem to be burdened with the Sisyphean curse to labor on ever without hope of equaling a classic, seminal debut record. Horses this isn't, but it is easier to get "gung ho" about than other Smith releases of recent years.

www.pattismith.net

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Altaira

"The Dukes Split"

(Self-Released)

Raging punk rockers Altaira bust out their So-Cal heritage with a totally powerful release "The Dukes Split." Heavy Guitar work and throttling vocals make for a high-impact, original punk sound teeming with energy. While the 5-track EP leaves the listener craving more, it's just enough to get the point across that these guys mean business.

www.altairamusic.com

Melanie

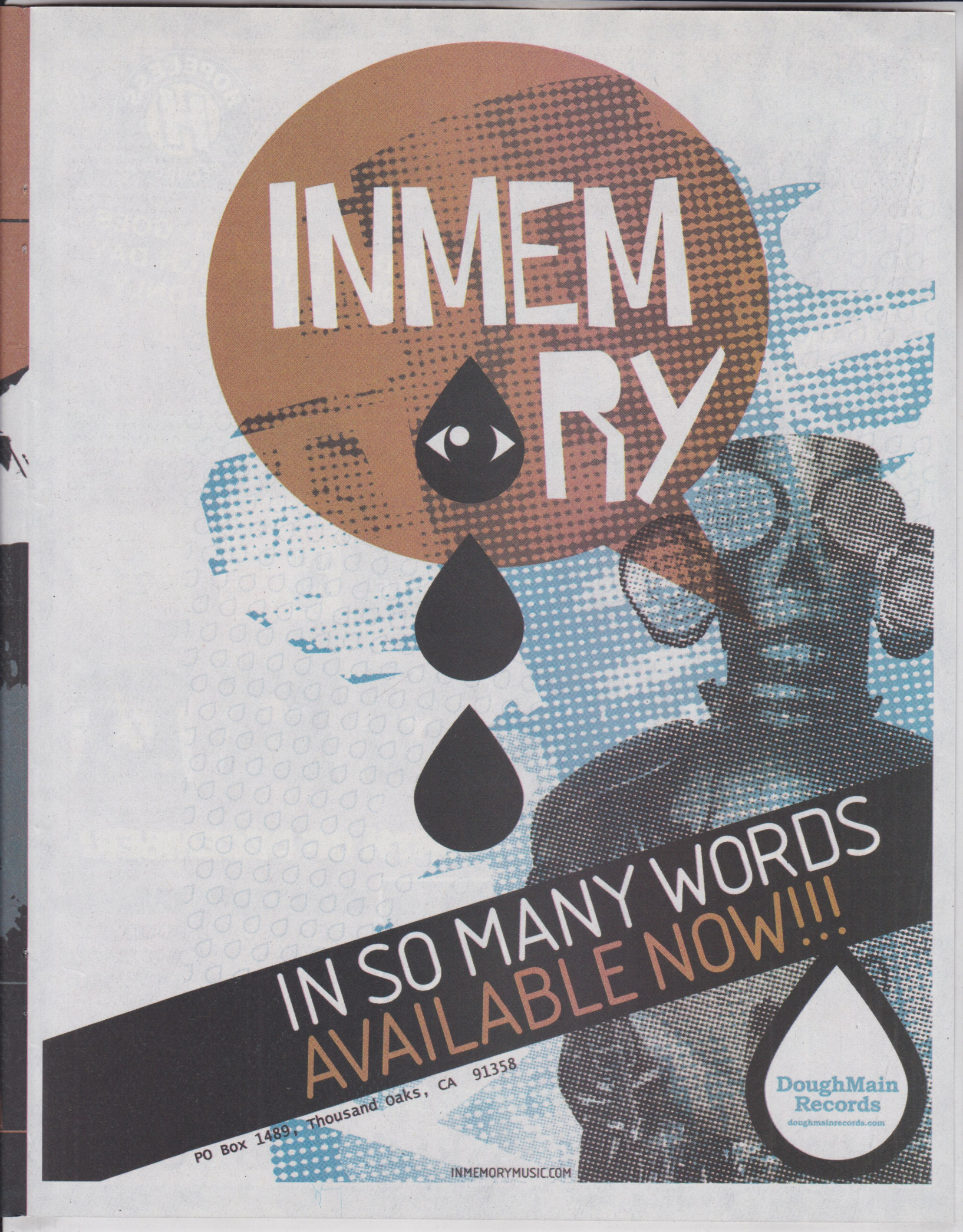
Bohren Und Der Club Of Gore

"Black Earth"

(Ipecac)

After creating hardcore in 7 Inch Boots, musicians Morten Gass, Thorsten Benning and Robin Rodenberg turned into an ethereal saxophone quartet creating instrumental jazz of the dark-and-doom variety. The pulse of this album is the slow heartbeat of the last moments of a lonely murder victim. The motion is the frozen legs fear of a paralyzing nightmare. Take the Melvins, strip away the volume and infuse with a classic, cool jazz vibe and Quaaludes and you have Bohren Und Der Club Of Gore.

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte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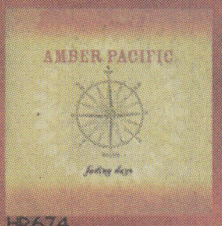

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